

"ALL STORIES COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER

LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

MAY 1910

A COMPLETE NOVEL

"THE GLOWWORM"

A RARE LOVE TALE WITH SWIFT
ACTION AND AN ENTRANCING PLOT

By WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

AUTHOR OF "ROUTLEDGE RIDES ALONE"

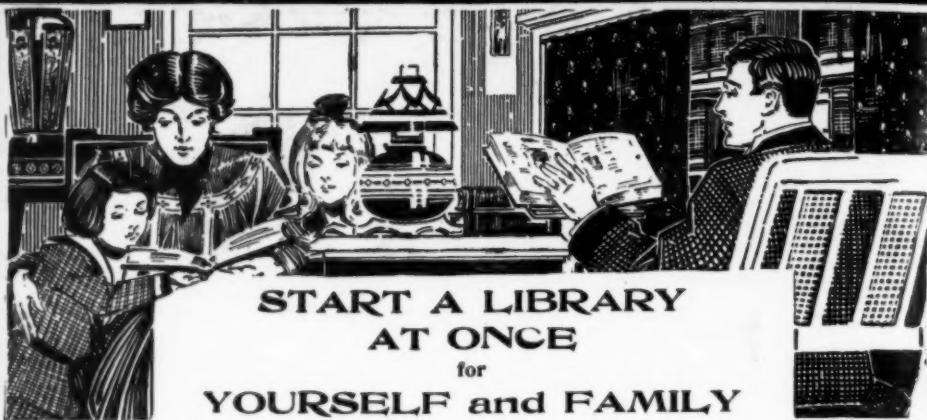
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MAY, 1910



THE GLOWWORM

BY

WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

Author of "Routledge Rides Alone," etc.

I.

NATHAN CRANE stepped out of a cab before the Temple Theatre—"sixty seconds from Broadway"—assisted a lady to the pavement, and the two entered with the crowd. The music had not yet begun, and Crane turned to his companion.

"Three or four years ago, this theatre was known as Faber's," he said reflectively. "It has been changed about a good deal since. There was a curtain then, which pictured an ancient Grecian ruin—a gloomy, heavy thing, but not inartistic—at least, in its appeal to me—and underneath was a couplet—I think, from Ruskin—which read:

"So fleet the works of men, back to their earth again,
Ancient and holy things fade like a dream."

Crane paused, and the lady stirred nervously. She was a little afraid possibly that he might continue talking after the music began. "That was before we came east," she said. "I never heard of Faber's Theatre. You spoke as if there was more to the story. What makes you remember it so?"

"I was here one evening when a famous woman played 'Hedda Gabler.' My seat was a little farther forward, and I recall that *Hedda* was telling some man to get vine-leaves in his hair, when there was an explosion in the flies. The stage filled with smoke, and the curtain caught fire—"

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The music cut Crane short. When the selection was over, his companion said:

"You have the most astonishing way of startling one's interest, all in a tone of voice such as one usually discusses a little matter of routine. What on earth happened when the curtain caught fire?"

"Stampede to the doors. It was really a shock to me the way men acted. Women were crushed, you know, and there was time for all to get out." Crane hastened the story since there was only a moment's interval before the second selection and the curtain. "We were all in the dark a minute afterward. It was fascinating to watch the crowd, but horrible, too. I was stumbling about in the glary, smoky parquet about five aisles forward when I felt a woman at my feet. Somebody had crushed her down, you see. About this time that side exit yonder was burst open. I picked up the lady and made for it. The funny part of it all is, I never saw her face. She was young and lithe—light, I mean; wore a white net waist, and her brown hair had become unfastened. She had crushed a big bunch of English violets to her nostrils to keep out the smoke and gas. It was a raw, stinging cold February night. Somebody in the crowd threw a shawl about her, and I went back to see if I could find any one else—"

"And you never saw her again?"

"No. Queer, was n't it?"

The performance now ended the talk. In truth, but a skeleton of the story had been told. Crane did not believe in enlarging upon matters of possible personal courage in any company; least of all, one's near-heroics to a lady. He would not have mentioned the subject at all had not the theatre brought back so vividly the experience. Certainly he had no intention of disclosing the fact that the young woman in the white net waist, whose face he had never seen, since it was smothered in violets, and whose fallen hair had blown across his lips as he had met the winter wind at the exit with his burden—had become the nearest thing to a pure romance which thirty-two full and thrilling years had brought him. Indeed, it was such a fragrant memory, and there was such a subtle, almost psychic, element to his attraction, that he could not tolerate the thought that seeing her face could have made a difference. That he had not seen her face, he regarded as his life's prodigious bungle. All this, however, was an eminently intimate affair to Nathan Crane.

Crane's present companion was Electra Crannige, with whom he enjoyed a successful platonic relation. They had met in the West through her brother, Kipford Crannige, who is rather important to this narrative as a lay figure. Crane felt himself deeply indebted to the woman, and apart from this appreciated, as no other New Yorker, perhaps, her intrinsic values.

The story of their meeting may briefly be told. Crane had been riding along the eastern plateau of Utah; specializing in the ores of manganese. Nightfall brought him to the small, snappy town of Nineveh. His mission being in no sense so pregnant as Jonah's, he had intended to ride on in the morning. Instead, he tarried six weeks, mostly on his back. It proved to be pay-night, and Crane entered into the festivities of the town with glad spirit until they began to coarsen and pall. It was about eleven o'clock, in fact, when, turning to leave the bar for his cot upstairs, he stopped a bullet, a large, man's size bullet, technically known as a Colt's forty-four. The lead was intended for Kipford Crannige, who was dealing at a faro layout, and who had exchanged hot words with a gambler upon whom Dame Fortune had steadfastly refused to smile.

It appeared that young Crannige appreciated the courtesy of the stranger, for he turned over his game to another, and took the fallen one home. This was fortunate for Crane. The house the Cranniges occupied in Nineveh was the only place quiet, large, or orderly enough for a gentleman to battle for his life. In spite of the kindness of the mother; the outside aid summoned by the elder Crannige, who was a mining expert in charge of extensive manganese properties in the district; even in spite of the low voice and cool hands of Electra Crannige to steady him through the darkness, Crane's wound took him down very close to the Gates. Until he was ready to ride again the young woman's attentions were not only constant but exceedingly deft. It transpired that her brother Kipford had told her, but not the others, the truth of the incident. This was brought out in one of her final talks with Crane, who would not have mentioned at all her brother's part in the shooting.

Early in his convalescence, Crane could see that the sister's prevailing passion was for Kipford, for his welfare, future, and for his protection against evil associates. It was one of those mysterious family ties, knitted in childhood, which the complications of later life are powerless to break. Even the occasional gracelessness of the young man toward her made her tears the hotter, but her love no less. There was no other man in her life then, nor was there this night, two years afterward, when she accompanied Crane to the theatre. The latter never knew what might have happened back in Nineveh had the integrity of her devotion to the brother been less evident. Those are dangerous days when the human male is down with a great hurt, when his hands have not the strength of a babe's, and his heart hungers for the gentle ministering presence. Mere admiration and gratitude have frequently overreached in the brain of a convalescent.

Before he left Nineveh, Electra confided her fears to the man she had done so much to mend. Kipford had shown a gambling bent

from a boy. Nineveh, which she hated with an inexpressible loathing, had fostered the inclination into a mania. She had heard, moreover, that the young man had a gift at gaming; certainly he was seldom the loser—a fact which startled and dismayed her. The elder Crannige was dangerous in anger. If he learned the extent of his son's playing, it would mean a scene that would result in Kipford's leaving home—to follow the fatal trend of his life.

Crane explained to Electra that his business in the West would require but a few weeks, and that he gladly would procure a position for Kipford in New York on his return; also that he would play pilot in the metropolis until the brother was beyond all reefs and shallows, out in the big reckonable waters of his career—rather a mad promise for one whose religion, though it floated few dogmas, demanded that he hold fast to a covenant of this nature to the last ditch. So far Crane had kept his word. Through his efforts Crannige had been profitably installed in the Bank of All Nations, where he chafed not a little, but was held tight by a strong, cheery chap whose loyalty was novel, whose friends were desirable and legion, and whose habits were clean, though just flexible enough to be spiced for a younger man's emulation.

The sudden death of the elder Crannige in Utah, a few months after the departure of Kipford for the East, brought about the coming of the mother and sister to New York, where the fine fellowship between Crane and Electra Crannige assumed the character of a permanence after the breaking of a few paltry illusions. Such was the situation on the night when the Temple Theatre brought back to Crane's mind the memorable performance of "*Hedda Gabler*," the frail figure so electric to all his senses, and the touch of brown hair to his lips. Crane had taken Miss Crannige to Trent's for a bite afterward. The old subject was uppermost in the woman's thoughts.

"It has seemed to me that Kipford is getting more and more restless," she declared. "He comes to see us less than he did, and his visits are momentary. Tell me, is he gambling?"

"No, I don't think he's gambling," said Crane. "The little play that he indulges in is a mere relaxation. He's doing mighty well at the bank. Beekman, the cashier at All Nations, told me that Kip was the fastest man at accounts and money handling that ever came under his observation. He's a valuable man. I see him every day down-town and usually two or three evenings in the week; and where I am, the conduct of men and affairs is perforce exemplary."

She smiled more on account of the words from Beekman than because of Crane's whimsical last remark. "You're good to me, Nathan Crane—and good to him," she said quietly. "I want you to know that I am always grateful and full of regard—for what you have done."

"Please don't say any more," he asked quickly. "It's no ordeal to be friendly with a fellow like your brother, though I'd cheerfully be a friend to the devil—if you ordered. How's your salad? . . . Won't you try just a little bit of light wine with me, little sister, just once?"

Miss Crannige shook her head. It was so easy for her *not* to deviate, and so hard for the man who had bound them together. Crane had refrained from outlining the exact condition of affairs as regarded her brother, although what he had declared Beekman to have said was true. Kipford was restless, however, dangerously so. He was gambling in a small way, and rather too regularly, and his need of a pilot was considerable. The thing which made it hard was that the young man wholly lacked the stuff that makes for rugged palship. Crane squirmed a little at his evasion, but determined to make good his words, to try harder than ever to be a friend to her brother, even to risk being offensive.

He left Miss Crannige at her door in Forty-fourth Street and repaired to his own lodgings farther up-town. . . . The old romance had swept back into full possession, and with all its subtle fragrance. The atmosphere of old Faber's had robed it anew.

II.

CRANE went down to his work a few mornings later, conscious of a tension in his brain. Roughly, he felt like a man who is waiting for a career-making-or-breaking line by wire. The feeling passed quickly. His position was an important one with the firm of Gage, Green & Company, investors and brokers, noted for their wide and successful handling of lumber and mining interests. The firm was at this time underwriting bonds on a large timber proposition in Vancouver Island; and on this especial Saturday checks aggregating nearly one hundred thousand dollars were mailed to nine separate stockholders, most of whom were in the Northwest. Currency to cover this amount was turned over to Nathan Crane for deposit in the Bank of All Nations, on which the checks were drawn.

This was the beginning of a very rushed and wearing four days, the events of which, briskly told, are as follows: Kipford Crannige, second-cashier at the Bank of All Nations, was in the office; his superior, Mr. Beekman, being engaged with men and matters of vast importance in the directors' room. Crannige took the deposit from Crane, made out the receipt in the usual form, tossed the currency into his own cage, springing the lock, and took the receipt form with a filled pen into the directors' room for Cashier Beekman to sign. He emerged presently with the signature apparently in proper form, handing the receipt to Crane, who glanced at it and put it away. There

had been a previous appointment arranged by the two men to meet at Crane's rooms on this afternoon—a matter of outing over Sunday.

"I'll look for you at four, then, Kip," said Crane.

"Yes, we'll be through here long before that," Crannige replied.

He was tall and darkish of skin. His face was handsome in outline, but rather stony in expression, or want of it. Crane returned to his office, filed the receipt, and left for luncheon. It being Saturday, work was suspended for the day. At three o'clock, as he was starting up-town, he encountered the cashier of All Nations.

"Hello, Crane—just a minute," Beekman called from the entrance of an office-building. "I met Lionel Gage this morning, and he said he was sending over about a hundred thousand to us to-day. It did n't come, and it occurred to me to ask why—as you passed."

When it is considered that the receipt for this amount, signed supposedly by the man before him, was already filed at Gage, Green & Co.'s, the interest of such a remark to Crane can only be approximated by the outer mind. The instant need of time to straighten out the affair gripped Crane's faculties. He thought of many things in that moment: the gambling of Crannige; his friendly alliance with Electra; her utmost devotion to her brother; the boy's dexterity with cards and penmanship; his chafing and relaxations from gambling nights and stimulants; Beekman's receipt filed, and his own desire to save Gage, Green & Co. from the loss. The only way to do this was to connect with Crannige. No one could do this but himself; if, indeed, it was in his power to find the man who had given him a receipt for something which could not be reported in the clearing-house. All this he saw in a flash.

"Perhaps the stuff was n't all gathered up in time to deposit before noon," he replied. "Any way, it will be over the first thing Monday morning. I left a half-hour before closing. You know, the checks were sent away to the far West for deposit."

"I thought it was something like that," said Beekman, and passed on.

It was a gray, wintry day, but Crane found himself mopping a very damp forehead a moment later. Then he returned to his office, took possession of the receipt, and set out to find Crannige, a search which lasted—but is it not all carefully to be set down?

Kipford Crannige was not at his office, not at his house, not at his mother's house, and at four o'clock did not appear at Crane's lodgings as appointed. A dozen times in the next hour and a half, Crane called by 'phone the other's rooms, but could get no reply. It did not occur to him that the younger man would refuse to answer; and if Crannige planned to leave the city with the money, he certainly would have to go to his rooms first. Dismayed a little and unsteadied

by the possibilities, Crane finally went to the other's apartment. He found that Crannige had left a half-hour before with two suit-cases; that he had been in his room the better part of the previous hour; also that his telephone had rung repeatedly in the time. The woman of the house divulged this. Crane learned from her that the young man had departed in a green taxicab.

It was now after six o'clock. Crane spent the next hour in search for the driver who had taken Crannige away. The fact that the green taxicabs are operated by a distinct company made this possible. The call was, of course, registered at the main office, but Crane had to wait for the driver, who had encountered further business. . . . Crannige had been whirled to the Grand Central Station, and had reached there at 5:25, rushing into the station as if in great haste. The fact that the Boston and Albany Limited left at 5:30 now became significant. Another fast train for Albany, connecting there with a Boston Express from the West, was scheduled to leave the Grand Central at eight—in just forty minutes.

Crane sat down to think. The only way to save Gage, Green & Co. was to overtake Crannige before the money was gone. He might spend to-morrow in Boston, searching for Crannige, and be in New York again, win or lose, Monday morning, before havoc broke loose at his own office or at the bank. Given Crannige, he could stop the steal. As the matter now stood, he had only a forged receipt between him and responsibility for the theft. It was even worse than this, since he had already evaded the question to Beekman on the spur of the moment. Another matter: there was none but his own word (if it ever came to uttering it, indeed) that the penmanship on the receipt was that of Crannige. Why not his own, in the eyes of the authorities? . . . Then there was Electra Crannige, and his own failure of performance to her brother.

Crane took the eight o'clock train. The following day, in a Boston snow-storm, he explored every chance which a sound mind could conceive and a sound body set in motion. Night and train-time found him defeated, his brain a bewildering composite of hotel-lobbies, snow-still streets, deserted water-fronts, cabins of departing steamers, sequestered gambling-rooms—all this smothered, as the city was smothered in snow, in disgust for himself and Crannige; and all this pinned beneath the débris of a wrecked career. And snow—soggy, steady, silent snow!

In his berth that night, Crane tried to figure out one last hope—that the money was safe at the bank, Beekman's ignorance notwithstanding; that Crannige had gone for an outing on his own hook and forgotten—here was the split. How could Crannige in the same room with a ringing telephone forget? Then the suit-cases, Grand Central station—but not even these could hold Crane from sinking into

Caribbean depths of sleep. In full daylight he shot up the curtain by his berth, looked at his watch, and then stared out to find Yonkers. The town was n't there, nor the river on the right, nor the brown ribbon of Palisades, nor any metropolitan aura or periphery. Instead, there was snow—level continents of snow. The porter was passing.

"How soon will we be in New York?" Crane asked.

"New York! My Gawd, boss, we're a hundred miles from Albany yit—an' if we don't stir soon we'll begin to sprout hyar."

Then Crane laughed. He had traversed the full arc of misery the day before and had swung with the morning up into the brighter reaches of the world.

He breakfasted thoughtfully, and it was nine o'clock when he drained his second coffee-cup—bank-opening time. Whatever was to be done was due now. The train was crawling through an interminable snow-gorge behind the heaving plow. He might wire at the next station that he was detained by storm and would report as soon as he reached New York—and yet he hesitated before the idea. A hundred phases of the situation passed clean-cut through his rested mind. The merest line to Gage, Green & Co. now would put him out of the question so far as any private search for Crannige was concerned. He believed that Crannige would communicate with him as soon as he felt himself safe from pursuit. He considered it not unlikely that he would find a letter from the missing one in his room when he reached New York. Crane could n't forget that he had already incriminated himself by dodging the point to Beekman. Why had he done this? The answer came clear and unequivocal—Electra Crannige. Had he told Beekman of the forged receipt, Crannige would have been caught within an hour—and what, then, of the covenant? Crane could n't find it in him to be sorry. If he wired now, men from the office would meet him at the train. Even if he were not arrested, he would be held under constant surveillance. He would either have to accept his own guilt or declare the guilt of Crannige. The meeting with Beekman would enforce this.

"How far is it to the next station—if I wanted to send a wire?" he remarked to the conductor of the diner, and smiled to himself at the fashioning of the sentence.

"Albany is cut off," was the reply. "Wires down somewhere. It will be noon before we get there, at this rate, but the road will be clear below, no doubt."

Crane smiled again. "I have decided not to wire," he muttered. "At noon it will all be out. I'm in for it—in for it deep. . . . There must be word from Crannige for me at home. I can't believe the young fiend would let me be locked up."

The incoming trains were not watched. Crane emerged from the

Grand Central in the dusk, having already read the first stories of his default in the afternoon papers. Only one of the journals suggested that Crannige might be an accomplice; the others merely commented upon his disappearance as a coincidence, it having been ascertained that his accounts were all straight at the bank. Crane dared not go to his rooms at this hour. There was a stinging thrill in every moment and in every movement—the sense of being hunted. It was after midnight when he let himself into his lodgings, carefully drawing the curtains before he turned on the light. There was no letter. A tap at the door a few seconds afterwards jerked him from the mesh of savage thoughts. It was his landlady—a good woman who had mothered him for years. He would have trusted with her his hopes of ultimate redemption.

"Oh, Mr. Crane, it is n't true what everybody is saying, is it?" she asked feverishly.

"Now, just a minute, Mrs. Lamson,—please tell me first if there was n't a letter."

She drew two from somewhere in her dressing-gown. Crane's heart leaped with gratitude. "Police and newspaper people were here," she said. "You see, I took care that they would n't get the letters."

Both were from Crannige.

"Please sit down just a moment, Mrs. Lamson," Crane said huskily, opening the less bulky of the letters. It was dated at Boston the day before, and read:

MY DEAR CRANE:

I have planned this to reach you Monday morning before you start for the office. I shall be at sea in the *Mariposa* by that time—first stop Isle de Oro, the island sans extradition. I don't mind telling you this, because I know that it will be safe. It is the ugliest thing I ever did, Crane, but the bank was murdering me. I'm a gambler, old man, not a bank-clerk. As a gambler, I'm good—good enough to make a pile with this stake, and square up with the original. I thank you for being so good to me. I hate to think of what you and Electra and mother must think. I have n't overlooked the fact that my handiwork on the receipt is insufficient to clear you, so I am sending you a full confession in a separate letter—written on hotel stationery, the time and place stamped by the clerk, so that there can be no doubt as to its validity. I have written the confession in a separate letter, so that it need contain nothing personal, as in this which you may destroy. It will square you completely. Good-by and many thanks, my dear friend. I wish you could look at this as a forced loan—until I get the money back. Place it this way to Electra. God! a man in this game ought not to have a sister of her sort, nor a mother, nor a friend. Further words are no good, so good-by, and

Yours gratefully,

KIFFORD CRANNIGE.

Crane then scanned the confession. Crannige had spoken to Beekman in the directors' room on a matter altogether foreign to the Gage, Green & Co. money, and had stepped into a telephone-booth on the way out to forge the name of the cashier to the receipt.

"Mrs. Lamson," Crane said, holding before her the three sheets upon which the confession was written, "I don't care to have you read these, but I want you to write your name on the back of each sheet; also the date and these words on the first."

She took the pen without question, and Crane dictated the following: "I received this letter for Mr. Crane on the noon of Monday, February —, saw him open it, and can testify that the postman put the same into my hands."

"I thank you very much, my dear friend," said Crane. "You asked me if I were innocent. I am, but for the present you are the only person to whom I can declare the fact. Your writing on these papers is an added proof that all is straight with me. I must ask you not to mention a word of this matter to a soul—not even that I was here to-night. It will all come out clearly in good time. I think I'll be able to save the name of another man as well. Meanwhile, I'm under a cloud to all the world but you. . . . Keeping these letters from the police, Mrs. Lamson, is the prettiest of many pretty things you have done for me."

Crane kissed the faded cheek toward which a tear had started, and left the house with her promise. . . . He could clear himself within an hour now, and yet it made him all the more willing to let the charge rest against him, until he could carry out a big plan in his mind.

"It won't hurt Electra vitally to think for awhile that I did it," he mused, smiling at himself for scanning the white, deserted street on the chance of being followed. "And now I must be a wise and gifted thief to make a get-away."

III.

GIDDINGS was a little man, neat in dress, dryish to look upon, and identified by a face impenetrable as a quarry specimen. There was a thought of polish about him, from the narrow-pointed patent shoes to the shining bald-spot, fringed with close-cropped red-gray hair. His nails were flawless in form and finish; his linen and diamond scarf-pin shone; his eyes gleamed. They were small, round, red-brown eyes, the same raging or laughing. His hands were restless and chalky-white; his face clean-shaven, thin-lipped. Forty years would be a reasonable guess at his age.

Tuesday noon. Giddings has not yet breakfasted, but is sunk in a deep leathern chair, with his feet cocked up on the window-seat. You

would not know whether he was staring at the perfectly-fitting boots, or beyond at the steel-blue winter sky. He has just finished attending the various polishing matters for which only a man of leisure has the time and a man of preternatural cleanliness the inclination. Giddings thus awaits his appetite.

New York is outside. The room, not large, has a seasoned, mellow look. A rather consistent individuality runs through the pictures and books and furnishings. From the lean, dry look of the man at first glance, you would take him to be a clerk who has become an assistant-manager after a double-decade of painful but patient hammering at the case-hardened anvil of Routine. The room asserts nothing of the sort. It is the room of a gamester, which Giddings is, by all means, and the chief of a private detective agency also. New York does not hold five men cleverer or bolder at either cards or man-hunting than this same small, odd gentleman.

Giddings at length turned from the window to the morning papers and his mail, and presently was absorbed in an important local story, the gist of which may be condensed into a paragraph as follows:

Nathan Crane, the last of a once brilliant New York family, was missing; also a lump of currency amounting nearly to one hundred thousand dollars from the firm of Gage, Green & Company, bankers, with whom Crane had held an important position. Crane was said to be a man of singular grace, culture, and intelligence, of wide and daring travels. His habits, while known to be those of a modern New Yorker, were not even remotely dissolute. Lionel Gage, the senior member of the firm, at first refused to tolerate Crane's name in connection with the loss; and when finally driven to accept the indication of circumstances, expressed himself quite as much astonished at the breach in Crane's character as he was floored by the defalcation. In connection with the theft and flight, as alleged, was the fact that Kipford Crannige, second cashier at the Bank of All Nations and an intimate friend of Crane's, was also missing. It had been established, however, that the accounts of Crannige were absolutely correct.

Giddings mused for a while. He did not know Crane, but the face of Crannige at the Bank of All Nations recurred to him keenly. The detective's brow wrinkled somewhat. . . . A letter from Lionel Gage, written late the night before, asked the detective for his services on the case. The latter had already thought seriously of offering the same, and was not displeased. He now made an appointment by 'phone to meet a certain Miss Mallory within an hour at his office.

This young lady was admitted to Giddings's inner sanctum somewhat later than expected.

"Have you got a big, big story for me?" she asked.

"I hope to turn it into one before we're through. Are your

intuitions for sale again, Miss Mallory?" His round, red-brown eyes bored into the girl's face. "You know what a regard I have for your work in the Jennison matter."

"Just luck there—scandalous luck," she said lightly. "What is it now?"

"Two young men working in different financial institutions—"

Here Miss Mallory laughed charmingly. "You mean Crane and Crannige, of course," she observed. "Now, that's a queer thing. I've undertaken to work on that story for the *Empire State Express*."

"All the better. I'm turned loose on it, and almost my first thought was that the affair would challenge you. How have you made out so far?"

"Badly. In the first place I can't see how a big, golden chap like Nathan Crane, absconder alleged, who has all New York from which to choose his friends, should have made such an intimate of this young Crannige. All the papers have pointed out their so-called friendship."

"I have noted that Crannige has a sister," Giddings suggested.

"Yes, I talked with her this morning," Miss Mallory declared impatiently. "You infer that Crane fancies her enough to interest himself in the welfare of her brother. It may be—oh, it may be, but I can't quite admit it yet. The fact is, I have too high an opinion of Crane's judgment of women."

"You know this Crane, then?"

"Yes, but he does not know me."

Miss Mallory did not enlarge upon this intensely puzzling condition.

Here is a lady of the young century, wrought of its finest materials. Detectives, gamblers—such are coarse tools of the narrative. Even a delightful young New York gentleman, the now missing and perturbed Mr. Crane, can be suggested in black and white by a hand that feels not its mastery. But Adith Mallory—this is the time and place to falter, breathe aloud, to fast long and multiply words in all humility.

Twenty-seven at a venture—a young lady who sought her office, slightly apart from the editorial rooms of the *Empire State Express*, at her own good time, and emerged therefrom, also at her own good time, now with an editorial, now with a mystery, now with a big Sunday feature, but copy always that accelerated newspaper dynamics and crackled with the newest individuality. A slight, emotional young woman, who talked in telegrams when with people like Giddings, but whose animation of manner could be suppressed in no presence. This last was the spicy fruit of sheer temperament, with which she was fired to the point of genius. Miss Mallory rejoiced in superb health, and in her present state of growth active mental work was as necessary to her as clean air.

Before she had won the freedom to hunt the big game of the news-

paper field, she had paled and become sleepless in the midst of the frequent extended grinds which fill in so large a part of all the world's work. The starry quality of divination, revealed at various times, together with a nervous energy which lasted to the end of the task at hand, even to superhuman lengths, had not only brought amazing results on occasion, but had carried her with a rush to the top of the profession.

She was fearless. This is not an attraction in a woman, except when it is without the bravado which so frequently is the accompaniment of physical prowess in those whose work carries them into what used to be man's exclusive spheres. Miss Mallory was distinctly and finely feminine; so effective and fascinating, that one did not think to inquire within himself after meeting her, whether she was pretty or not, or beautiful. The more evolved the man, the more richly and variously did she unfold for him. Quite a strong statement, the last, but not over-rash considering that it is Adith Mallory under discussion. Slender, strong, swift, brown-haired, low-voiced, red-lipped, red-blooded, and eyes—sunsets and evening stars and after that the dark!

"About this sister of Crannige," Giddings ventured tentatively.

"I may do her an injustice," Miss Mallory said, "but I did n't like her. I am horribly sensitive to rooms. Both Miss Crannige and her mother felt that Crane was responsible for the Crannige disappearance. The mother drilled me in the family traditions, the family prestige, the Western glory of the family, its ancient familiarities and modern intents. Here's where the disappearance of her son seemed such a ghastly hurt. The girl was different. She was cold to all but a terrible personal loss—"

"Could this loss not have been identified with Crane?" Giddings inquired.

Miss Mallory did not like the question. "I have told you that it is possible, but it does not please me to think so. She seemed to blame Nathan Crane—and one who had to blot up a damp romance from her heart would not have done this with such swift and grim finality."

Miss Mallory arose. "I've got a full afternoon," she said, "but I'll be at the *Express* in the evening. There'll likely be a crack open in the slide of the dark-lantern by that time."

"You'll work this thing out with me, then?" Giddings asked.

"Yes, if I can help. You see, I'm busy with the story any way. I'll pray for more of the Jennison luck."

"That was n't luck, Miss Mallory. I uncover to your capacity for work and to your brand of acumen. By the way, does n't it strike you as peculiar—I mean the way we've gone about this thing?"

"You mean leaping at once to Crannige for a solution?"

"Yes. His accounts are entirely straight."

"At his bank—yes."

"What do you mean?"

"Only this—when I heard that Crannige was also missing, I became interested at once to find out if his accounts were straight with Nathan Crane."

Giddings, left alone, swung back in his chair, cocked his feet on the desk, and stared at the ceiling. Out of many minutes' meditation thus, was evolved a muttered sentence: "Astonishingly bright girl!"

Miss Mallory breathed deeply as she emerged from the office-building to the snow-filled street, and thought with a shiver, "Ugh, it's good to get out into the warm winter after that man-hunter's atmosphere!" The subject was dismissed with the added mental observation, "I'm afraid I'm too fond of dogs to appreciate men—that is, most men!"

These paragraphs are taking on rather a pungent detective flavor, but you can't always tell the cargo of a ship by the clutter on her decks as she puts out to sea. . . . A very busy afternoon of routine for the astute Giddings. He drew small blinks of light from the offices of Gage, Green & Co.; from the Bank of All Nations; from the separate lodgings of Crane and Crannige, and from the apartment occupied by Electra Crannige and her mother. . . . First of all, Giddings was impressed with Crane's genius for making friends. Apparently, the big fellow had won all his associates, from old Lionel Gage down to the janitor of the office building.

Mrs. Lamson, Crane's landlady, especially puzzled the detective with her avowed fondness for the missing one, notwithstanding the black and noisome cloud which enveloped him at present. The matter of the series of ineffectual telephone-calls between the two men was already newspaper property. From the Cranniges, Giddings learned little of value. The daughter was just leaving the house when he reached there about six in the evening. He was inclined to like Miss Crannige better than Miss Mallory appeared to. "A rather self-possessed and compelling-looking girl," was his inward comment. He had one question for her, already strung and drawn taut. As she appeared in haste to depart, he merely waited for her face to turn to the light; then launched the barb without warning.

"Have you or have you not heard from Nathan Crane since Saturday evening?"

A distressed look brimmed into her eyes. "I—why, no!" she faltered.

"You are lying, young lady," was the detective's mental retort. "You are not accustomed to lying—unguardedly. You prefer to be sure of your ground, which is good."

Miss Crannige left the house, and Giddings did not tarry long with the elder woman, who talked willingly enough, but chose her own subjects—family grandeur, virgin until now to the faintest breath of taint; and poor Kipford, the tool of a brilliant and devilish companion. . . . Giddings dined leisurely, there appearing to him then nothing further to do before meeting Miss Mallory in the *Express* office. Dining, he mused.

"Looks as if both were in the game, and that Crane has been double-crossed. Each man reaches his room at four, or a little after, Saturday afternoon. One of them has the money. Crane was the one who first had it in his possession, and it is likely that he met Crannige before four. If Crane had the money in his room Saturday afternoon, would Crannige have refused to answer his 'phone? Would not a man with a hundred thousand be at least an object of interest to Crannige? If Crannige knew nothing of the hundred thousand—what made him afraid of his telephone, and why has he disappeared? . . . Yes, Crane must have got rid of his package before he began to call the other. . . . Where have I seen this Crannige before? . . . I'm shunted off onto a dream siding somewhere. A man does n't steal a hundred thousand dollars to hand it, or half of it, to another man. And yet Crane had the money, and he appears to have been badly in the dark between the hours of four and six Saturday afternoon. . . . I wonder where Miss Crannige was going? She clearly lied to me. . . . It might have been a good thing to follow her."

This possibility grew until he became actually annoyed with himself for missing the opportunity of shadowing the young lady. At eight o'clock he entered the editorial rooms of the *Express*. Miss Mallory had not yet come in. An hour passed. The city-editor was as much at loss as Giddings, since the young woman had not even 'phoned. Shortly before ten the detective went down into the street for a few minutes. He returned ragged-nerved, savage from waiting and wrestling with his now-persistent torturer—the thought that he had missed his one best chance. For ten minutes longer he sat tight by sheer effort of will. His brain was lamed from much ineffectual thinking.

"Telephone, Giddings," the city-editor remarked finally. "Go into the booth if you like. She talks like the original groggy lady."

"Hello," said the detective.

"That you, Gid?" The words winged across the city in a sweet, winy drawl.

"Yes."

"Say, Gid—this ain't no way to treat me! I ain't used to waitin' this way for no man. Old Yuen Chen's got the bird's nest ready, and I'm wobbly with appetizers. By the way, Jennison——"

"Yuen Chen in Steep Street?" Giddings asked quickly.

"Yep. Taxie ain't too speedy to get you here. Don't be a tight-wad, Gid. I'm waitin', honey-boy."

Giddings, recognizing in all this Miss Mallory's methods, strode out of the booth, disclaimed the humorous purport of the city-editor's glance, and two minutes later was in a cab, double-timing it for Steep Street.

IV.

THE Chinese restaurant of Yuen Chen's was down among the East River piers, rather well-known for its execrable locality and its marvelous cooking. Thoroughbred New York would rather dine oddly than well, but frequently does both. Yuen Chen formerly sold noodles, tea, and chicken to teamsters and sailors—a mere barnacle of the water-front, his shop was. Who knows what slumming party cleared his stock one night and lived to talk about it? Any way, Yuen Chen has two floors now, cut into compartments, and midnight seldom fails to fill them all with maids and men. . . . It was close to ten-thirty and a rather dull hour when Giddings stepped forth before Yuen Chen's stairs. Miss Mallory called from another machine:

"Oh, Mr. Giddings, let your cab go, and come in mine."

The detective obeyed, his mind clearing for a big disappointment. He had not expected to find her alone.

"I'm frozen, frazzled, and famished," she whimpered, as he sat down beside her. "I want you to do just as I say, and not cross or rush me, because I'll turn savage. There's no hurry now."

The Giddings gloom thickened. From the way the lady spoke the last word, there had been much need of haste.

"I must go first to the *Express* and get some stuff in," she said. "That will take an hour or less. Then I'll talk to you. I have much to say." Her face was blanched; her eyes brilliantly lit.

It would be neither pleasant nor fruitful to discuss the Giddings of the next hour. At ten minutes before twelve he stood in the doorway of her tiny office. The place was incredibly littered; the walls papered with magazine covers and clippings, and even the green shade of the lamp pasted with notes and cuttings. Miss Mallory was bending forward upon her typewriter, her face covered in her arms. The swinging lamp shone down full upon her brown hair, sunk its white light into the mass of troubled beauty.

"Sit down a minute, till I put on my rubbers," she ordered. "I feel as if my brains had all oozed out on streets and copy-paper; as if I were carrying about a damp, dark skull that whined with emptiness. Or maybe it is n't my head. I have n't eaten, Mr. Man-hunter, since—well, it was before I met you this noon. . . . Let me see, what shall I have first? A split of Bass; then half a roast chicken done on

hickory embers; one of Tedragon's morbid salads—oh, take me to Tedragon's—and coffee!" She was slipping on her rubbers thoughtfully. "You know, I love Eighth Avenue! Take away Broadway—oh, sometimes I wish I could root out its roar and dazzle from my head!—but leave me Eighth Avenue with its shilling wines, its spotless delicatessens, gaudy nickelodeons, beer-can honesty, and timid prices. Eighth Avenue, I belong! It is two generations removed from the slums of Europe, and a generation or two this side of the slums of Broadway."

She tossed a grimy shawl over her type-mill, coupled hair and hat with a single stab of the pin, wriggled into her coat, seized her purse and gloves with one hand and turned off the light with the other. A rare spectacle to Giddings. In the street, she caught his arm. It was midnight, Broadway's darling hour.

"I'm going to shut my eyes crossing the square," she said. "When I breast this swarm, flitting from glare to glare, from shows to flesh-pots; when I see the women all snug in cloaks that *pawned* would buy winter's food and coal for many a family hungry and shivering, not ten minutes' walk away—I think I grow a little mad, Mr. Man-hunter. I want to lead the mob of starving—thousands weak with privation, not thousands strong—I want to lead them out here under a blood-banner of havoc to loot the spoils of the rich. . . . Ugh! are we nearly across? I feel the animated stomach all about me!"

These were matters remote from the Giddings range of comment, but here was a young woman who shaped and tinted her work in the world after a fashion of her own. Since her work was of rare quality, it was only fair, he reasoned, to tolerate her absurdities. Giddings was all tense to clutch her new brain properties on the Crane stuff, but he was afraid to prod for them. He had imagination enough to fear her throwing the whole matter. Any way, there was nothing further to do for the night. Moreover, there were a multitude of accomplished Cranes and Cranniges in the world, but he had found only one Adith Mallory. . . . Seated in Tedragon's, fifteen minutes later, she asked unblushingly: "What was it especially you wished to see me about?"

"At your leisure, I hoped you would tell me where I might put my hands upon Nathan Crane or Kipford Crannige—or both."

"I don't quite know where Crannige is," she said humbly.

Even the controlled Giddings jerked at this. "But Crane—"

"I can tell you where—but you can't put your hands on him. He's two hours out at sea. His ship is the *Anthropos* of the Hook and Horn line. Her first port of call is Coral City, Isle de Oro. You have waited very patiently."

"But when you called me?" Giddings faltered, clearing his voice.

"Crane was sitting in the next stall to mine in Yuen Chen's, waiting, as I did not then understand, to board his ship at the last minute."

"Was he sitting there alone?"

"With Electra Crannige."

Here the full meaning of his own error flooded the Giddings consciousness. Had he followed, he would have made the capture single-handed—a quick and clever capture, plucking the prize right out of the elaborate ramifications of the police. Miss Mallory watched him closely as she sipped her Bass.

"Please go on."

"A little before eight, I left the office, after turning in some afternoon copy, thinking to get supper and then return to meet you. Passing the subway exit in Times Square, I saw the pale face of Electra Crannige. She did not see me. Something in the look of her face made me follow. She was nervous, doubtful, whiter than usual. Perhaps I should have followed any way—"

"Wise—ah, yes"—a Giddings observation.

"And down we went—down Seventh Avenue. Why—that I shall never know. She walked slowly, close to the curb, shrinkingly. Down, down to Twenty-third; then over to Fifth Avenue and down, down again. I kept about forty feet behind. The clocks struck nine. Mind you, an hour on the trail of that slow, maddening woman. All at once she stepped into a hack and almost lost me. I hailed a taxicab by sheerest luck just in time for the driver to get his eye on the horse-power ahead. I was excited now and hot-nerved.

"Don't lose sight of it for a minute, but don't go too near, and let me out a little way behind when the hack disgorges," I told the driver. He was a gem, and obeyed to the letter. The slow pace of the vehicle ahead, which determined the pace of mine, drove me almost to the pitch of screaming. We spent nearly a half-hour getting from Union Square to Yuen Chen's. She crossed the pavement. I think she met him in the stairway, but I'm not sure."

"Crane?"

"It proved to be. I waited outside fully three minutes; then followed up the stairway. Here's where I blundered." There was the strangest possible twinkle in Miss Mallory's eyes as she leaned forward to add, "I might have called you in that three minutes."

"But you were n't sure then she was meeting Crane," Giddings declared.

"You are generous. Think of it," she added hastily, "the Crannige woman knows me. It was taking a chance, but I followed. She and her companion had disappeared into one of the compartments, so I breathed again. I passed along idly before the doors—you know the place?—until finally I heard a low, interesting voice. No, it was

not hers. A man's. The door of the adjoining compartment was open. You see, it was too early for the crowd at Yuen's. I entered. The partition was of wood, painted baby blue, with here and there a Japanese volcano, frosted like a Christmas-card. Yuen is not a stickler on his local color. I ordered a pot of tea and listened.

"It was mighty brave of you to give me this last word," the man said. "I was sorry afterward that I asked you to come—to a place like this. But when a couple of chaps run away like 'a—I was going to say, like a couple of thieves—'" He laughed.

"You have n't told me that you are not," the Crannige woman said in that stubborn, unlit way of hers.

"I can't explain yet," he replied.

"Perhaps you can tell me if Kipford is a thief."

"Sh-h," he returned. "No, I cannot speak of him any more than of myself just yet. It is all dark—a dark sort of accident. Call it that."

"You are willing that I should believe that my brother is a defaulter?"

"Far from it, Miss Crannige," he pursued gently. "I want you to think of him as you did before last Sunday—until it is all cleared up. I called you here, knowing your agony, to ask you not to give up hope about either of us—not to think of us as New York does to-night."

Miss Mallory sighed. The supper was being served. She forked a piece of lettuce from the salad-bowl and nibbled it appreciatively until the waiter had left the table.

"Would n't you think, Mr. Man-hunter," she asked suddenly, "that when a man appealed to a woman like that—I mean a big, wholesome, valorous chap like Crane—would n't you think that the woman would throw her arms about him? It would n't have been out of place—at Yuen's," she added, smiling.

Giddings nodded with a show of warmth. In truth, he wanted the rest of the story, not temperamental interpolations.

Miss Mallory resumed: "And what do you think she said, this cold-blooded creature whose name is Electra? It was this: 'But I do not understand, Nathan Crane. You have either taken the money or not. What part has Kipford in all this? His accounts are correct. Why should he have run away?'

"That's the difficulty," Crane spoke dully at this point. "There's got to be a lot of misunderstanding until it is clear. I wish you would trust me to clear it. There's still a big chance. You used to trust me—"

"You know where he has gone? You are going to follow him?"

"Yes, but—"

"Please tell me," the Crannige woman pleaded. It was her only softening, but—I pray I do not wrong her—it sounded Delilah-like to me. I think I sent imploring thought-forms through the frosted volcanoes for him not to tell."

"From our point of view, his answer would have been interesting," Giddings ventured to say.

"Oh, I learned where he was going, but she did n't," responded Miss Mallory, and resumed:

"If you tell me nothing," Miss Crannige said angrily, "why did you call me in the night to a low place like this?"

"I see I was wrong," he came back now splendidly, "but I called you here hoping to ease your mind a little—to ask you not to accept the worst until the returns were all in. I might have put it in a letter, but I was foolish enough to think that if you could see me—you would n't suffer so about him."

Miss Mallory stirred the rest of the narrative:

"I heard the scraping of Mr. Crane's chair. He seemed suddenly to realize that his time was up; or it may be that he had received an illumination as to the nature of the woman. It was then I telephoned to you. The 'phone was on the counter just outside, so I had to disguise my voice. I mentioned 'Jennison' so that you would surely understand. I heard nothing more that passed between them. Mr. Crane handed her into the carriage not two minutes after I had hung up the receiver. From the stairway I saw him follow the receding hack with his eyes for a moment, then turn in the opposite direction and walk swiftly toward the water-front. I followed."

Giddings listened now, tight-lipped, perspiring, a fact which Miss Mallory did not miss.

"It all happened quickly after that. I had to stop at the end of the buildings. An old man stood with a lantern by the cut at the foot of Steep Street. There was a launch waiting. I heard the old man call out to Crane that he was just in time and that two of the ship's officers would be down in a moment. Crane climbed into the launch. Not two minutes afterward, the officers arrived and followed Crane into the boat, which sputtered out of the cut. The old man with the lantern yelled, '*Bon voyage!*'"

"My God!" Giddings exclaimed almost savagely. "What a police force—to let a Hook and Horn steamer get off unwatched!"

"Why, the *Anthropos* had cleared from the pier two hours before, the old man told me," Miss Mallory explained sweetly. "She was lying then off somewhere by Governor's Island. Besides, you would n't have appreciated a triumph of the police at this point."

"Do you realize, Miss Mallory," Giddings said heavily, "that it would have been worth twenty-five hundred dollars to you just to have

informed those two officers, or even the old man with the lantern, who their belated passenger was?"

"Oh, yes, it is possible," she replied carelessly, "but somebody would have had to go down to Isle de Oro for Crannige and the loot. By the way, it was the old man with the lantern who told me all about the ship and her first port of call, Coral City. He was a dear, perfectly respectable old gentleman, but I shudder to think of what he must have thought of me—dangling at that hour down at the foot of Steep Street. All of which ends my narrative, Mr. Man-hunter. I walked back to my cab in the street before Yuen Chen's, and was scarcely seated before you came."

"But I might have overhauled the *Anthropos* even then—before she got to The Narrows!" Giddings bewailed.

"So you might," responded Miss Mallory. "It did n't occur to me just that way. But then, there would still have been Crannige, you know."

V.

GIDDINGS sat back and surveyed Miss Mallory, as she finished her coffee. He had reviewed his own blunder to the dregs, and put it away in his mind among other matters unthinkable. Isle de Oro was established now as the destination of Crane and doubtless that of Crannige. To gather in these men was a matter of exceeding delicacy. The detective put this away also, but for the moment only. He reflected that any one could have advised the two officers of the ship, or even the old man with the lantern, in regard to the identity of the man in the launch. He granted that a certain few could have followed Miss Crannige, as the woman before him had done, but he was struck with the fact that no one of his acquaintance was gifted with the luck of Miss Mallory—the luck that put the Crannige woman in her way; the luck that placed a taxicab in sight when the other caught the hack; the luck of being led by the woman straight to Crane; the luck of the empty compartment and its thin partitions. It had been the same in the Jennison case; the same, he had learned repeatedly, in her newspaper work. A woman who could summon luck like this would be a mighty fine possession, Giddings had the candor to observe unto himself. She would work out beautifully in the polity of business and the probity of the home.

"Miss Mallory," he said lightly at last, "you 're a wonderful little girl. I 'm sure that there is n't quite so wonderful a little girl in New York."

She set down her coffee-cup wearily. Giddings shivered inwardly and buttoned up his mental coat. People of the lake country have seen in their big waters the look which Giddings caught in the woman's

eyes. The quick change of wind and murk in the north; the whip of a gale on the far water turning up to the light a million wavelets which flash like scales; the distance smoking with storm—gray, humming, altering, lowering, leaving a track of white behind. Meanwhile the watcher stands in the still sweet summer.

“Don’t be foolish. I don’t like it,” she said. “I am not at all wonderful, but a weird, skirted creature whose wires of capacity are jumbled between man’s and woman’s endeavor. I am not at all happy. I am not normal. My tastes are vitiated for all that is common and much that is sane and sound and sweet. I do not approve of women doing what I do, but I pay the price. It is not what you say, but the way you look, which makes me think of all these things. Don’t do it again.”

“All right, Miss Mallory,” Giddings hastened to reply. His upper lip had a stretched look for an instant, as if he could not relax the muscle. “There are a few more points worth mentioning. Shall we cover them now, or are you too played out?”

“No,” she answered curiously. “I’m brand new again—just deliciously drowsy.”

Giddings was really admirable in the way he put the rebuke behind him. He related entertainingly now what the day had brought to him, and inquired finally: “You really think, Miss Mallory, that if Crane had been captured to-night, we would n’t have found the money on him?”

“I think the money had already gone on to Isle de Oro. I doubt if dollars would tempt Nathan Crane to lose his home in New York. I doubt also that a thief would have taken the trouble to try to convince a woman that her brother was safe in body and character.”

“All right,” said Giddings; “but does not the fact that Crane knows where the other has gone imply that the two are in together on the deal? Think of it!”

“It does unless—it has occurred to me that Crannige might have written to Crane—either from incredible innocence, extreme remorse, or utter deviltry. He might have done so just before his ship sailed. But this is rather a weak structure.”

Giddings nodded. “I’d like to have questioned Crane to-night on the matter,” he said. “The fact is, we were mighty close to it.”

“When the girl Nathan Crane risks capture for—merely to lighten her cares—can’t get the facts out of him, I doubt if there is any lore of the police or any third degree that could force a confession,” Miss Mallory declared.

“Well, let’s get down to the pith now,” said Giddings. “There’s more than an even chance that Crannige lit out for Isle de Oro. At least, Crane thinks so. Absolutely, Crane himself is on the way there,

and, guilty, innocent, half-and-half, or double-crossed, "Crane is worth going after. You and I are the only people in the world who know where to put a hand on him."

Miss Mallory did not comment here.

"Isle de Oro is a gorgeous little island," Giddings resumed with thoughtful smile. "Oh, yes, I've been there. You go down past roaring Hatteras—then break into the summer Caribbean and sail along green isles which blow out perfumed breaths to you. I've been there, but I'm taking Lafcadio Hearn's lead on the scented breeze stuff. Then you veer off east below the Antilles, far from travelled lines, until you see the blue hills far away. That's Isle de Oro. I'm a cripple at description, but that's the idea."

"I'm transported," Miss Mallory declared.

"If I had a hundred thousand of another man's money and wanted to relax, it would be in Isle de Oro," he continued carefully. "I think these men plan to wrap the drapery of their couches about them in Coral City. The draperies there are red-tape. Oh, there are thousands of meters of red-tape there! So many that a New York warrant for a man's arrest would be as compelling—as a comic valentine."

"This little tropical gem in recent years has magnetized the minds of all men who want to sit down on those parts of Mother Earth's bosom securest from extradition. The interesting colony of crime-cultured gentlemen has moved largely from Mexico and Central America to the fresher and fairer resort known as Coral City. It is the home of ex-cashiers, delightful adventurers of linguistic talents, of penmen and promoters. Also the present generation of the Mississippi steamboat gamblers has assembled in numbers in the palms and banyan groves of Isle de Oro, there to rest and revel in the world's dreamiest climate. It's a land without law, Miss Mallory."

"How perfect!"

"I am told," the detective continued, smiling still, "that The Palms, the only hotel of consequence in the city or the island, is a veritable palace in its appointments, and filled with art treasures and loot from all the lands on earth. It is kept by a Spaniard, one Celestino Rey, a man of mystery, fabulously rich, said to have been the most murderous pirate the Caribbean has ever known, and all that. He had just brought home a bride from South America, about the time I was there—a perfect thriller to look at, they said in the city. The Spaniard called her his 'Glowworm.'"

"What a startling idea for a honeymoon name!" interposed Miss Mallory, shivering.

"I can speak of The Palms from the outside," said Giddings with a chuckle. "It's a wonder, sitting pure white upon a hill—"

"But did n't you go in?"

"No; the house was *filled* when I asked for accommodations. There's a slim man at the desk there—a mild, low-voiced person with hands like a woman—who can smell a detective-bureau before you darken the sally-port, if you bring a whiff along. I would n't do."

"This is literally enchanting!" exclaimed the listener.

"Now, I am helpless in Isle de Oro," Giddings concluded. "The Palms caters to the man who has pulled a fortune in the simplest and most direct way—in exchange for his reputation; not to the man who wants him. Crane and Crannige do not know me, but the clerk at The Palms does, and I believe there are other men on the island who do. Besides, the colony, no matter what its interrelations are, hangs together against the law and the outside world. You see, there is only one city and one hotel of importance on the island. The natives live off this institution as the people of Monaco live off Monte Carlo. Of course you can't take a man by force from the island, but there are ways—"

The trend of Giddings's remarks was by no means lost to Miss Mallory. "I feel that you are about to suggest," she interrupted, "that the splendid story of Isle de Oro has never been published in a newspaper."

"Exactly," he said, "and also that the *Empire State Express* should have it first."

"I'm supposed to do it and incidentally to bring back Crane and Crannige with my copy?"

"Listen," said Giddings. "You might tell Glinden, your managing editor, all that you know, and why it is best not to publish it yet. Tell him of the great story in Isle de Oro, and of the chance to get Crane and Crannige as well. Tell him that you need a two months' vacation badly. Meanwhile, I'll arrange plenty expenses. Your mode of procedure when on the island is not fully worked out yet in my mind, but it will be to-morrow. In the meantime, what do you think of the skeleton of the idea?"

"Uh-h. Take me home, Mr. Man-hunter. I'll tell you to-morrow, when you get some flesh and skin and talcum on this skeleton."

Miss Mallory read herself to sleep that night, but it was a restless sleep, in which Nathan Crane passed to and fro, regarding her ever with humorous but reproachful eyes; and begging her not to judge him hastily, but to wait until the returns were all in, and try to like him while waiting. Always her tongue answered him in cold venom, while her heart beat frantically against the nightmare, striving to give the lie to her words, and to make him see that she trusted and—

And always the bland, smiling, immaculate Giddings stood by to keep the devil in her awake.

In the early afternoon of the following day, she discussed the matter with Mr. Glinden, who approved.

"I'll take the next ship for Isle de Oro," she telephoned Giddings. "I don't know yet just what your plan is, but it is best to let me be a free lance, I think—that is, I want to follow my own plan, if I like it better than yours."

"All right," Giddings replied doubtfully. "Gage, Green & Company will be glad to furnish expenses."

"That's another point," replied Miss Mallory. "I prefer to go on *Express* expenses. If I win—trust me to charge you plentifully."

Giddings, puzzled, tried without avail to alter this determination. "By the way, Miss Mallory," he concluded, "I have ascertained that a steamer left Boston Sunday night for Rio Janeiro—her only port of call on the way being Coral City, Isle de Oro. It looks as if Crannige had made it, but why Crane hung over, and how he learned where the other had gone—"

"Is for me to find out," finished Miss Mallory.

VI.

NATHAN CRANE descended overside from the ship to the shore-launch in the harbor of Coral City. The *Anthropos* had just dropped her cable a half-mile offshore. Clouds of yellow mud boiled up from the bottom of the hot, sharky harbor as the anchor gripped the ooze. The distances of Isle de Oro shone through the heat-haze with the vividness of jewels. The seaward slopes were gardens of palm-covered hills, through which gleamed the whitened walls and colorful turrets of old Spain. The strip of beach was white as a road of shells, winding, endless, dazzling. The sheds of the water-front had the look of toy houses. Films of heat danced upon their red and blue roofs. The sky was a blinding azure that traced the hills and harbor with its brilliance, its silence and magic.

Mid-morning. Crane sat upon the rail of the puffing launch and squinted at the city which the nearing shore unfolded. His teeth were set tightly upon the thick amber-bit of his brier pipe. The air was too hot to smoke in, but he did n't notice. None of the splendid tropical setting which filled his eyes entered the brain behind. Frozen twilit Labradors reigned there. In the past ten days, a train of thoughts, black as funeral-coaches, had found their circle in his intelligence. Slowly, steadily, they moved, wearing deeper and deeper their groove, shadowing much that was clean and bright.

A hitherto undiscovered plane of sensitiveness developed within him on ship, its surface unpleasantly arable to imaginings. He pictured from every angle the name he had left behind in New York. He sensed the tone in which this name was being uttered by the acquaint-

ances of yesterday; even pictured their surprise at first, the whispers, the adjustment of circumstances and suspicions, the full acceptance of the truth of his defalcation, and finally the perversion of his past, by these acquaintances, to fit the astonishing dishonor of the present. Back of all was rebellion against the attitude of Electra Crannige at the last. He had not quite expected this. It burned and shamed him. All of which thoughts inevitably brought the blight of the whole matter—Kipford Crannige in the city before him, by his own word! The chance of meeting him within an hour!

Leaving his baggage, Crane walked slowly up the slope from the water-front, and entered the main thoroughfare, Calle Real. The city was built and appointed and named on the lines of Spain. The American loved this setting, loved the courtesy of men, the mellowness of women, and the sumptuousness of the architecture which the elder race of conquerors has left in so many isles of the sea and in the veins of their native-born. Calle Real was wide and decently-paved with smooth stone blocks. The broad, low shop buildings with their iron-gates and balconies, their high-ceiled and spacious show-rooms; the stately *residencias* with *cochère*, stable, and servant-quarters on the ground-floor, and a score of kindred sights, brought back the flavor of former wanderings.

Approaching mid-day had quieted the street. Crane, still partly attired in clothing intended for a northern winter, was bound in the pressure of the day long before he entered the imposing gates of The Palms. The gilded dome of the hotel was the crown of the city. He had seen it shining far out in the offing. The building stood on an eminence like a temple. It was broad and white as truth. Calle Real parted to the right and left at the gates. Within were groves of palms, gardens of rose, rhododendron, jasmine, flames of poinsettia, and mystic glooms where orchids breathed—fruits, fragrance, fountains.

Drenched, panting a little, but strangely lifted in heart, Crane entered The Palms and breathed the cool of the vast shadowed halls. There were no guests about. A pale, slender, sad-eyed gentleman appeared in a sort of throne of marble and mahogany, and Crane turned to him, looking for a register. There was none.

"Just give me your name, please, if you wish," the pale one suggested.

"Eton Troit, London," said Crane absently.

It was copied hastily upon a card and thrust away. No questions were asked about baggage, about payment in advance, nor about the nature of the quarters desired. A Chinese servant appeared. The stillness and majesty and strangeness of the place; the endless dim halls all robed in tapestries and animate with oils; the heavy fragrance from the gardens, which the heat of midday crushed out of the blos-

soms; rugs of all the world's weaving, from the golden fleeces of Persia to the fire-lit Navajos; a glimpse to the left of a room walled with books and sunk in an Egypt of silence; an acreage of covered billiard-tables to the right! A composite of such impressions made the moment memorable. Crane could think only of a king's winter palace—in summer. He left the servant and stepped back to the desk.

"I'm not quite sure," he said in the hushed tone which the house seemed to compel, "but I may be here some time. You have n't told me anything about the rates of the hotel."

The sad-faced gentleman regarded him with a queer, disappointed look, as if such affairs were for the lesser servants of the establishment and not in the province of gentlemanly dealings. "All that will be placed before you presently, Mr. Troit," he declared.

"I should like to see the list of guests who arrived on the *Mariposa* from Boston," Crane requested further. "She was due here two or three days ago, I believe."

The pale one looked disturbed. "We have no such list, sir. Later in the day, when it is cooler, however, most of our guests are abroad, and you will doubtless have little difficulty in finding the gentleman or lady you seek. You will also become familiar in a few hours with our little peculiarities of management. The Palms has been evolved upon somewhat unusual lines. You will have little to complain of in service, I believe. Indeed, if you wish, a servant of your own will be placed at your disposal, so that you may not want for anything."

Hereupon Crane suffered himself to be led to a room, the elegance of detail and effect of which was imperial, no less. He stepped with relief out of his heavy clothing, bathed in a deliciously-tempered shower, and sat down to think. The chair folded about him like a cool, soft arm. The whole atmosphere was embarrassingly sensuous. Before him, the city and the sea! Midday drowsed in haze over the streets. The horizon beyond the harbor distances was a blazing intensity of light which stung the eyes with quick contraction.

Crane became conscious of a smile upon his lips. The nerve-wear had ceased in his brain. New York, the money, the sense of being hunted, had all become insignificant for the time—like a light-running dream. He could not analyze the balm which soothed his spirit, but identified it vaguely with the beauty and the silence and perfume-drugged air. He fell asleep with delicious ease at last and awoke to a lightning sense of his surroundings, and with a glad knowledge that something had righted itself within him; that hope was abroad in the world. He smiled at the thought, but it really seemed to him as if his tired brain had been laved in some healing water while he slept.

"If Crannige is here, I'll find him," was the conclusion of the whole matter. . . . A letter had been thrust under the door while

he slept. The paper was of palest blue, heavy-laid and exquisite. The name was written heavily in an angular, eccentric hand, and the contents proved unique:

MR. ETON TROIT,

Sir: Many of my guests have caught the spirit of The Palms more readily and pleasurable after making the acquaintance of one whom you would denote in your country, I believe, the proprietor. We do not use the word here, as we are all friends together. The fact that my manager showed you apartments is enough to make me glad to welcome you. He makes few mistakes. Will you not dine with me at eight this evening in the Shield Room? If you have a previous engagement, pray do not let me disturb it, as I shall be ready at your good time.

With unwonted regard,

CELESTINO REY.

Crane sat down, chuckling. The systems of the house moved him to much amusement and marvelling. To think that the pale, strange creature whom he had designated as rather a sleepy clerk, inclined to be fresh when roused, had weighed him from all angles of desirability, and all in that brief moment of the morning while he had walked from the entrance to the desk; and then, like some more or less infallible Peter, had allowed him to pass into the everlasting peace of The Palms! This was a delicious morsel to Crane now—inasmuch as he had not been turned away. Then to be invited to dine the first evening with the establishment's presiding individuality, who did not approve of the term "proprietor." There was a tropic, an orient, delight about the whole business.

"To think of instantly and eternally losing caste in Isle de Oro—on the glance of that tired-eyed bystander!" he reflected. "It makes one a bit nervous about taking liberties. I'll lie low until I have mastered the atmosphere."

The mere contact of wool was an irritation in this climate, and Crane succeeded, through a servant, in purchasing ready-made an admirable outfit of white clothing without leaving his room. A few minutes before eight, he emerged and sauntered to the stair-case. The lobby moved with men and women now, not many, but distinguished. It was like a court-ball with *attachés* present, so various were the nationalities represented. The hum of the voices borne to Crane seemed quickened with half the tongues of Europe, and now and then an intonation of Asia. Males preponderated, accentuating the attractions of the women, of which there were one or two sense-stirring blooms. For just an instant on the stair-case, Crane stood among the punkah-blown palms to scan the faces below. Crannige was not there, but the watcher found the languid eye of the manager cooling itself upon him. He wished he had not been in such haste to seek

the missing one. Crossing the Saracenic tiles from the stairs to the desk, the American was conscious of being covered with glances of swift, searching intent from the guests.

"They are surely interested in strangers here," he mused. "So am I. They look sharp as needles and acid. What a bundle of crooked histories, crooked as the coast-line of Isle de Oro! . . . By the way, I'm one of them."

Low chimes struck the hour of eight. A Chinese stepped to the desk with Crane.

"You are dining with Señor Rey?" the manager inquired lazily. "Ah, yes; the boy will show you to the Shield Room."

Crane trailed the soft-footed Chinese through bewildering halls. Señor Rey stood in the doorway, behind him a low-lit arcanum of leather and metal. . . . The face of the Spaniard was startling, like the discovery of a crime. It was lean and livid as a cadaver. The pallor of the entire left cheek, including the corner of the lips, had the shine of an old burn, the pores run together in a sort of changeless glaze. In the haggard, bloodless face shone eyes brilliant as ebon gems. The teeth were whole and prominent, as was the entire bony structure of the face and skull. Señor Rey had a tall, attenuated figure, with military shoulders. He moved awkwardly, as if lacking control of his lower limbs, but in his hands was a singular contrast. They were swift, certain, delicate, full of artistry. The scarred face and ruffled throat united to form a horrid suggestion in Crane's mind of a body that had been tortured *full length*—flesh once thrawned in machinery conceived of devilish dreams in inquisition hells. The American's hand was grasped in the cool, bony grip of the other, and he was held for an instant in the gaze of bright, unquiet eyes.

"I welcome you, Mr. Troit. Do you plan to be with us some time?" The Señor spoke a low, monotonous way. His English was but little colored with his native speech.

"I cannot tell yet," said Crane, wondering at the strength of the apparently wasted fingers which had bound his hand for a moment. "I came to find a certain man—" He checked himself quickly as he noted the yellow eyelids of the other droop a trifle. "Please don't misunderstand me, Señor Rey. The man I am looking for has been one of my friends. It is for his welfare, as well as for mine, that I came to Isle de Oro."

"Frequently the man one comes to Isle de Oro to find is the last one to be observed here," the Spaniard declared.

"You mean that he sees the other coming?" Crane suggested with a laugh.

"I have never put it just that way. You speak less like an Englishman than an American, Mr. Troit."

"I have been much in the States," Crane granted.

Four elements of delight—linen, silver, crystal, and candle-radiance—were superbly blended upon the small round table between them. To Crane, it became a most memorable dinner. As a talker, Rey was artful and inspiriting. His strangely disordered body seemed an ancient classic volume, done in scarred vellum—a book of perils, named Celestino Rey—and all things about, the spears, guns, skins, shields, even the grim shadows, were but references to the text. A tray of wines and a sheaf of cheroots were placed upon the balcony at length, with chairs covered in puma-skins. The two sat down overlooking the gardens under the new moon.

"Mr. Crane, or I should say, Mr. Troit—I must not make the mistake again—do you feel at all like discussing the matter which brings you to Isle de Oro?"

"How did you know my name?" the American asked in excitement.

"Your picture was unmistakable. There are many complications arising from modern newspaper enterprise. One is hardly safe in having one's picture taken nowadays, so clever are the newspapers in reproducing half-tones. Your interesting story was in my hands within an hour after you set foot ashore this morning."

"The newspapers are misleading," said Crane. "As I explained to you, I came to Isle de Oro—to find a man."

"Yes. He was mentioned also, I believe."

"You can make it possible for me to find him."

"Unfortunately, I cannot," the Señor returned. "Believe me, I am sorry. I like you extremely well—even more I will say, which must stand as my last word—I like you so well as to wish that you had come to Isle de Oro a steamer or two earlier."

Crane drew from this that Crannige was already in The Palms and was not greatly loved. "You realize, then, what this means to me, Señor Rey?" he inquired with eagerness.

"Exactly. I spoke carefully."

"That the precedence of another as a guest of yours makes my coming an embarrassment—a misfortune?"

"Please do not try to reduce the matter to exact weights and measures, Mr. Troit. It is my purpose in The Palms to cut down tension to a minimum."

"The fact that I am getting hard-hit and don't deserve it seems to have no concern."

"Remember, this is Isle de Oro." The Spaniard stared long into the darkness before continuing: "Do you know the admirable law of Karma? It sets forth that there are causes for all effects in human life. Who knows but that you are here working out the punishments for past sins—sins possibly of other lives? Remember that you are

young, handsome, of grand health, charming manner, and excellent brain. Remember that the world is big and full of joys, even with New York and London eliminated. Recall some time Celestino Rey's philosophy: Life is a misfit garment to be worn with a smile; no man is so unendurable as he who takes himself and his wrongs seriously. Bah, the worst is prison, and prison made saints of John Bunyan and Oscar Wilde. Witness, the latter's *'De Profundus.'* I cannot help you—I may be forced even to be less than negative in my position. But remember all the time that I am very fond of you, Mr. Troit. And now I must go."

Crane took the cold hand again and could not forbear a laugh. "Be as little less than negative as you can, Señor Rey," he begged. "You have expressed much of my philosophy, though I know little of the Hindu's law of Karma. Extraordinary as appears your part in my present interesting situation, I think I am flexible enough to appreciate it. I thank you for a truly inimitable dinner."

The Spaniard's limbs moved a trifle crazily after sitting. "As an example of what a full-length man may do, and how little signifies the petty purposes of most men," he declared at the door, "pardon me for saying that I have built The Palms out of clods which the world has hurled at me, and I have preserved enough vitality to laugh at the achievement. Always keep down the tension, Mr. Troit. . . . Ah, thank you. I am dead below the knees."

Crane strolled an hour or more in the gardens, reflecting, but always on the watch for Crannige. He had not the remotest suspicion that one of the Chinese servants was shadowing him. "Crannige is here," was his constant thought. "He knows I am here and is hiding." This was the worst possible aspect of the case. "God! to have ten minutes with him behind a locked door! Rey won't help me, but I wonder if he would interfere?"

Until the hour was late, he moved about the billiard-room, buffet, lobby, and library, filled with subconscious marvelling at the extent and grandeur of the place, as well as at the perfection of service. A Chinese was within hand-clap momentarily. There were scores of them, fleet, silent, immaculate, full of understanding. Their presence in no way disorganized his mental attitudes, as a plethora of white servants might have done; and he reflected with interest that he had heard somewhere that Chinese have no auras. In his room finally, he sank into a chair, fully-dressed and without turning on the light. The moon hung in glistening purple over the harbor. Troubled, drowsing, he sprang up at last with an impulse to go to the door, which he opened softly. . . . At the far end of the hall, fully seventy yards away, was Crannige, leaning drunkenly upon the arm of a Chinese.

The two were moving across the main-hall along a lesser passage, and disappeared as he moved swiftly toward them. Reaching the passageway, he found it empty, but turned with a start to discover a servant at his elbow.

"Did you see that gentleman pass here a moment ago?" he whispered.

The Chinese nodded.

"Show me to that gentleman's room and I'll give you ten dollars."

"To-morrow," whispered the Oriental, and turned away.

Crane could only return to his room, where he passed a sleepless night. The situation thralled him, but he had not achieved those delightful reaches of philosophy wherein to enjoy it impersonally. He stepped out of bed in full daylight, to discover another letter under the door, again from Señor Rey:

Might I trouble you, my really delightful friend, [it read] not to bestow any favors larger than a *peso* upon my servants? They are really very well paid and do not expect it. Frankly, ten dollars for any slight service is disorganizing, and increases the tension. I beg to be considered

Yours, in a really mellowing friendship,

CELESTINO REY.

VII.

IN the next four days—and they were days plucked out of paradise in their visual glory—the mind of Nathan Crane was the arena for a great sweep of emotions. Four days and nights brought him not even a nibble further of Crannige's presence. In certain moments he regarded Celestino Rey as a prince of the world; in certain others, as the ranking agent of hell. He cleared the atmosphere from time to time by laughing at the whole matter, but clouded it again with an almost insensate desire to get his fingers upon the substance of Kipford Crannige. Out in the gardens on the third evening, he was attracted by an abandonment of song to the extreme corner of the premises, where he found a gentleman in a sorrowful condition of over-stimulation, singing medleys in the checkered moonlight.

"Hol' up!" the stranger challenged cheerfully. "Sure you're no—not a Chinaman?"

"Sure," said Crane.

"All ri', you may 'vance. I'm too sens'ive to have any Chinaman put his hands on me to-ni'. Join me on zis ruzzic bench?"

Crane sat down, sadly amused. He wondered if he might not be of assistance to the young man who was so delicate to the touch of an Oriental.

"Ever 'ear of prodigal son?"

"Yes."

"All others imitations. I'm prodigal firz 'n' laz. On'y, I ain' goin' home. Guess I'll weep."

Thereupon he burst into tears. The spectacle of wasted youth, readable even in the vague light, checked the humor of the moment for Crane. The other straightened up presently and cocked his head unsteadily toward him. "Who'd you s'pose I'm weepin' for?" he demanded.

"Yourself?"

"Nozzir. B' no means. Poor young feller los' forty thousand to ol' Celestial las' night—an' he might have needed it." The prodigal lurched over upon him. "S-sh," he warned. "Yep, forty thousand. He'll be livin' down city soon—poor young feller. . . . I'll never live down there. Fam'ly would n't 'low it—would n't think of it! Jus' two classes here—zose live in The Palms an' zose who don't. . . . You would n't believe 'bout my fam'ly. They're all parvenus to my fam'ly!" Here he laughed with an inimitable infection, and added, "Never could take my fam'ly seriously—so I'm paid four times a year—to stay away! . . . Goo' ol' fam'ly!"

Crane managed to inquire lazily: "Tall young chap, black-eyed, black, curling hair—who lost the money?"

"Thash—that is the chap. Jus' here few days. New's a bank-note. Playin' 'gain to-ni'. Cool, cunnin' forty thousand! Lots folks been glad t' get it."

"What did you say his name was?" Crane asked lightly.

"Did n't say. Nobody knows names here."

"I meant his Isle de Oro name?"

"I forget—whash—what's name of sizzor of Goneril?"

This unhorsed Crane for a second, but he inquired, "You mean in 'Lear'?"

"Yesh—not C'delia—ozzer she-devil."

"Regan?"

"Thash—that is the name. Poor young Regan—goin' like a quarter-horse!"

Crane led the remittance-man to his rooms, and choked a little at the profusion of gratitude which fell to him. It was his first bit of luck. In every possible way, he had tried to learn the name which Crannige used in Isle de Oro, not only without avail, but he had succeeded through his efforts in making himself a disturber of the reigning peace of The Palms, and in drawing a further note of polite protest from *Señor Rey*. He wanted to write this Regan who lived and moved in what was to him a forbidden penetralia of a house of challenging mystery. That very night he wrote, and wrote well, handing the letter to the manager at midnight. He felt that anything short of a box of infernal-machine dimensions would be delivered.

Crane was abroad early the next morning. Having weighed the whole matter, studying entire his past connection with Crannige, he was inclined to look for a reply. Crannige could not think of going on indefinitely in hiding. He had been seen, would be seen again, and could not count always upon disappearing miraculously. In regard to the Spaniard, Crane waived all avowals of friendship. He was aware that his own mission made him undesirable in The Palms. Crannige not only had the precedence, whatever Rey chose to make of this point, but so long as his money lasted he was no doubt a source of kingly tribute. Forty thousand lost in a night! Who can tell what acid this intelligence injected into the veins of Nathan Crane.

Mid-forenoon brought no answer. Crane verged into a dangerous mood. His utter powerlessness stimulated the rising passion. It was as if a big area within him cleared for action. Once before in his life this had happened, and there was havoc. Mostly it had been his way to laugh. He could laugh now, but it was an exterior laugh. Apparently all Isle de Oro was Rey's to command; apparently the man he wanted was allowing his last flicker of soul-light to be smothered in Rey's system of protection. . . . Word that a ship was in from Savannah drew him to the water-front toward noon. He was just in time to meet the launch bearing passengers ashore from the big twin-screw liner *Andes*.

It is always a queer moment, this of stepping ashore into a strange city. The passengers chattered nervously and looked about as if wondering where to begin. So far as furnishing any conveyance from the pier to The Palms, Señor Rey completely ignored incoming steamers. Crane stood idly by, but thinking at high pressure. A young woman in the restless company at length commanded his attention. Others besides Crane, perhaps many men, have known the exaltation of the moment—to discover before one's eyes a woman veritably materialized from one's own fairest conceptions. Roughly, it is like being swung upward in the first vast leap of a balloon, but so often a parachute is carried for a harrowing, if not a fatal, descent. She halted a trifle bewildered in the throng. . . . "Brown hair! Brown hair!" It was as if the words came singing out of the gilded blue of the sea. She caught his eye and turned shyly toward him.

"Could you tell me how to get to The Palms?"

There were *carometas* about; the great dome of the Spaniard's establishment stood at the very head of the Calle Real, a gorgeous attraction of daylight; yet to Crane it seemed eminently proper for her to inquire. He noticed that she was tall, in radiant white, brown-haired, red-lipped, low-voiced, and eyes—sunsets and evening stars and after that the dark!

"Let me have your bag, and I'll see you to a carriage," he said. "The Palms is at the head of the street."

It was done in a moment. Her low-voiced "Thank you" became the note to which all sounds were attuned in his brain, as the hum of bees might identify itself with the memory of an entire summer. All that he had known of *tangible* romance before—and it was incredibly little, considering his bulk and years and attractions—was thrust back for all time into the gray winter of the world. He wondered now—he could not quite tell in the full garish day, but must needs wait for silence—if the fragrant little temple of his inner dreaming still stood so bravely in its own high place. Had it fallen? Was it proof against the flaming conquest of a mortal woman? Or was it entered, possessed, animated? . . . There was a singing within him, a dilation of veins; the whole substance of the man was vitalized with springing verdure. . . . He scratched his head presently (for the heat was prickling at the roots of his hair) and inquired unto himself soberly, "I wonder if the lady will have a similar tonic effect upon other gentlemen of Isle de Oro?"

Strolling back, he studied—with an exotic eye, for the deeps of the man were rousingly welcoming the brown-haired invader—the faces of all nations. It was as complete a record of crime, cruelty, and debauchery as one could find in the human indices of any port. Many were closing their annals of error in decrepitude and beggary; others were well-knit studies of evil, with health still hanging on more or less, and much deviltry to do. A blue blouse or a bit of khaki; British puttees and a flare of crimson; Russian boots and a glimpse of sodden gray; or an American campaign-hat crowning a motley of many services, explained that the soldiers of the world found Isle de Oro desirable in many cases for finishing enlistments. It was quite as evident, too, that the criminal riff-raff of this spinning planet found lodging in the lower city, as did its aristocracy in The Palms.

"A couple of hundred such as these," Crane cogitated with a laugh, "led by some cool devil of a humorist, could loot the Antilles and make a get-away before intervention. What an army of ruffians and incorrigibles the proper sort of adventurer might recruit here!"

Crane was altogether wrong. At least, none but Señor Rey could command this town to desperate endeavor. His *pesos* and influence, like alcohol, penetrated and dominated the mass. Signs vehemently proclaimed that American beer was important among the imports of Isle de Oro; and in a certain lower section of the Calle Real, he studied the pavement to avoid the brazen smiles and furtive gestures from upper balconies.

"Strange," muttered Crane. "Wherever lawless men gather,

wherever there is blood upon the ground, their mates fly after them from courts and slums. It is not men alone who love to venture—and venture to love!"

The afternoon brought no reply from Crannige, but the evening contained for Crane a second visitation from the lady of the *Andes*. It was at dinner. A spoonful of sherbet was poised half-way from the glass to his lips as she entered the hall. His mind-surfaces were sensitized again; again he felt a tingling readiness for battle and sacrifice. No greater honor can be paid a woman than to avow that she arouses a yearning in man for the lost innocence of boyhood. Crane would have dropped all the polish which he had won from contacting the world to possess that moment the inner clarity which years inevitably despoil. He was too entranced to consider the humor of the thought—that she, the energizer of his emotion, was sitting alone at a table in The Palms in the island sans extradition.

He found himself studying her profile worshipfully, his mind kindled with matters which hitherto had been mere dormant potentialities, his eyes concentrated upon the exquisite arch from her cheek to her brow, where fineness, ancestry, temperament, the arts of the mind and its approaches to perfection, are revealed in the erection of a line. . . . A half-hour passed. From sherbet to coffee, Crane was utterly beyond the responses to mere brute taste. Seemingly without any volition of his usual working faculties, a plan matured somewhere in his mind. It dazed, yet led him. Moving to her table, he ventured respectfully:

"It would be a delightful privilege for me to know you—may I?"
She looked at him searchingly for an instant, then smiled.

It must have been her nearness which gave him reasonably right words. "If this is audacity, tell me," he added. "The fact is, I meant—just what I said."

"It is n't," she replied. "Only, it is rather new to me. I am going to take what you said as a very rare compliment—a compliment to you, too—in accepting what you have said just as if it were true."

"Thank you," Crane breathed deeply. "You'll find it so."

They walked in the gardens after dinner and prospered famously in fellowship. A mysterious inner attraction which each felt for the other, and which the woman had felt for years, effected much in an hour—much that years could not bring about, without responsive ranges of vibration. Crane told her all that four days had given him regarding Isle de Oro and The Palms. Then a question of hers filled him with despair.

"Do you realize that you have not told me your name?"

"My name is Troit," he replied in a dry tone. Here the pivotal point of their acquaintance, his frankness, was broken, and the fine

ease which each had drawn from it. There was a quick turn of her head as he spoke. Her silence, and the petty vulgarity of a lie after such lofty beginnings, bored into the man's foundations. He might lose, but he could n't let the lie live. "I must explain, in justice to you," he added, "that my name is Eton Troit—in Isle de Oro."

The change was instant. At least, in his own great relief, he imagined that pleasure instantly quickened in her eyes again. He did not pretend to explain how the woman he wanted her to be could accept his companionship on an acknowledged fiction, but did not allow the harrowing note to intrude.

"I have heard that it is quite the mode here to have names and costumes for the climate," she said with a laugh. "My wardrobe is limited. I am Miss Mallory, as in New York—Adith Mallory."

In the next hour their discussion ranged from firefly clusters to astral constellations. This was not the girl whom Giddings knew and admired, but an emancipated woman living to the very rim of her being, playing a game all spiced with enchantments, and breathing her first torrid night on land. That flexible abstraction, Honor, was now on the table, and she was saying:

" . . . Always when I think of what a man should be, this story comes to mind. Shall I tell you? Well, it was—never mind—any way, I was some younger—and it happened in New York. Everything I know happened in New York. A man was in love with a woman, or thought he was. She was a good girl, no doubt, good enough and sweet enough in her way, but her mental properties were all heavy and just-so. You could bump against them. I mean that she did not have a single wingèd thought. I always think of her as a little square house, painted blue; on a little hedged lot; a mat at the door, with a sign 'Please wipe your feet before entering'; parlor furniture all tied up with linen coverings; a row of books all even sizes—is n't it queer?"

Miss Mallory looked up as Crane laughed. "I can't help it," she went on. "I always think of that woman's mind just this way—all fenced in with high boards of morality. The stranger passing by on the highway is an object of suspicion. The beggar waits at the gate for his collation and takes it with a lecture. The gates are locked at night, for the woman carefully hoards all these little possessions of hers. And then, I forget the pointed rods sticking up from her house to ward off the flashes from Heaven! . . . Oh, common, common—forgive me, but only a woman could know her. I know the breed—the breed of all who hold themselves standard white and judge their kind—the rank-scented, self-righteous, infant-souled, unlit Respectables!"

"Great!" came from Crane in a muffled tone. The light, half-

humorous way in which she built the picture detracted from the seeming vehemence of the words.

"This woman had a brother. I did n't know him. He was just bad—possibly interestingly so, but I am afraid not. And yet he must have had something fetching about him, after all, because he made a very good friend in the man who loved the sister—or thought he loved her. I always say that because I am not quite sure that the man did n't have his own reservations. He was so wise and deep-seeing in men's affairs.

"And now for the friend and lover—I must grant he is a favorite of mine in type—a big fellow, brave and true and tender, you know. Mind, I am building him as I like to think he is! No little, compact house, no clipped-hedge ethics, no fenced-in morality for him! A big house with hidden chambers, no doubt; a defective structure here and there, but you are not met with laws at the open doors. There is a bright fire in the heart of the house, and big easy-chairs where you may sit down and stay. Oh, yes, and there are swallows in the eaves, bees in the gardens, humming-birds in the honeysuckles, and a dove-cote in the tower! . . . Deliver me from the man who has no wings anywhere—who has n't something about him that refuses to lean, refuses to crawl, refuses to contact something said or done or written! There, I have the characters. Now for the story. It's short.

"I know what happened, but I can't tell you exactly how it came about. The brother and the lover passed as good friends and worked together in a place where much money was handled. One morning the brother, by certain clever manipulations, was enabled to take a large sum of money. His friend was the first to discover the theft.

"'The boy is rotten,' I think he said to himself, 'but his sister must n't stand for it. If I disappear, the deal will pass to me. At worst, he'll be thought only an accomplice. Meanwhile, I'll find the boy, bring back what he has left, and patch the thing up as well as possible, without her ever knowing the facts.'"

Crane and Miss Mallory were standing at the southern gate of the grounds, which was locked. There was but the width of the highway from the gate to a steep declivity (of a hundred steps or more) to the water of a narrow cove, where Señor Rey's sailing yacht, the *Savonarola*, lay moored. The tips of her spars were just visible—a pair of black shafts against the southern sky, where the starlight was a wavering sheen like watered silk. Crane rarely smoked a cigarette. He rolled one now, but forgot to light it.

"The point is," she went on eagerly, as if enamored of this part of the narrative, "there were n't any heroics about him. He was disgusted with her brother and with his own luck, but he knew what it

meant for *family* shame to enter that little house of hers. Possibly he understood that when one's mind is full of little proprieties and conventions—that family disgrace may be its supreme tragedy. He could n't let her suffer—that was all there was about it! . . . He just said, 'I'll take the gaff and try to bring back the boy and the coin.' . . . No glory of sacrifice about it—just a gritty thing to be done, and done quickly.

"He disappeared, following the boy as best he knew. The theft reverted to him. He was advertised with the crime all over civilization. The missing subordinate was merely commented upon. . . . I spent an evening with the sister shortly after this. Her point of view is interesting. 'Oh, the horror of it,' she moaned to me, 'that he should have led my poor brother astray!'"

Crane started to speak, but cleared his throat instead. Presently he felt the cigarette in his fingers, lit it, and finally asked:

"Was this matter ever cleared up?"

"Yes," she answered doubtfully; "the money was returned, or most of it. The real truth was known only by those concerned. There was a partial vindication for the nobleman——"

"Did he marry the woman?"

"Would you spoil the whole story? He could n't clear himself with her altogether—without incriminating the brother. That would have nullified his whole action."

"Do you think this song-bird—this chap with the wingèd life on the premises—did exactly the right thing?"

"It is n't to be analyzed, Mr. Troit," she said spiritedly. "I hate to make his action look indirect or Quixotic. Possibly he loved the woman more than I have suggested. Possibly I have done her an injustice. To me, this is the whole substance of the matter: that without ostentation, self-deceit, or whining, he followed his first inspiring impulse to spare her from shame. That was big—splendid! . . . Queer that I should confide one of my pet emotions so soon after meeting you."

"It's more interesting to me than you realize," Crane said abruptly. "By the way, did you know this fellow with the dove-cote in his tower?"

She laughed quietly and turned to him. The man saw in her eyes a fulgent reflection of the lofty night. "I knew him," she replied, "but he did n't know me."

It was n't an easy night for Crane. He was wrestling in the dark with visions and conflicts, between two and three in the morning, when he heard the soft, swift tread of a Chinese in the hall, and the rustle of a letter being slid under his door. He waited a moment before

turning on the light. It was a fourth missive from the Spaniard and read:

MY ESTEEMED TROIT:

The request herein to be set forth may appear to you a reflection upon the quality of my friendship, as it certainly is an indication of the force of your personality. You are felt in this establishment, my valued friend, like some tarrying Nemesis. Permit me to observe, and I am smiling as I write, that you are one of those disturbing persons stone-blind to defeat. This has a wearing effect upon many about us. Personally, I should ask nothing finer of the Fates than to devote myself exclusively to you, but this is impossible now. Tomorrow at noon my servants will assist you to any quarters elsewhere which you may have chosen by that time. Believe me that when a certain tension is lifted—and it may not be long—my house will be open to you again, as always is the heart of

CELESTINO REY.

VIII.

MISS MALLORY remained in her room the next morning a long time before thinking of breakfast. Twenty hours in The Palms had brought her much that she wanted, including a man. For days beyond numbering without pad and pencil, this man had been one of the richest tenants of her mind. It had been her pleasure to equip him with attributes of her own choosing. Always when the males of her kind showed themselves with extra dreariness; when illusion after illusion was broken by a word, a laugh, a fear, a convention, or just a pitiable discovery of limitations, she had returned to this (greatest of all illusions, possibly) in her own mind and expanded it beyond all possibility of the newest frailty. It seemed necessary for her to hold fast to something, if only an ideal.

Miss Mallory's way was ever to rush hopefully into new attachments, giving the lie to the flaws which her deep-reading eye detected at the outset. She actually yearned to encounter a man incapable of revealing flagrantly his earth-bound nativity. She did not think that she asked so very much—just a man without vanity; a man who could do a noble thing thoughtlessly and unwatched; one who could not be dollar-poisoned, who loved his kind, especially the poor and whipped; and one whose emotions and intelligence were big enough to enfold her own. Sometimes she put it all in a sentence: "Just a man who is great and does n't know it." Not so very much, indeed.

Doing the work of brainy, busy men, winning their praise, drawing their emoluments, yet always seeing with a woman's eyes, Miss Mallory had been pushed farther and farther from the reality, but she held hard and fast to the man of her mind. . . . Several opportunities had come to her in the past to meet Crane, but she had faltered at the last moment and let them slip. She had known him only for an instant

long ago, but he had shown her such a crystal manhood then, that she had kept her faith in the race by building upon the fragment.

There was happiness now in that her structure had not been demolished the night before. Her smile grew rapt as she thought again of the big, troubled, lonely fellow making himself acquainted with her at the dinner table. No convention there. Why should there be dissembling and covert meanings between human beings—the highest evolved creatures of all earth-life? Why should verbal strategies pass between clean minds? Two hours with Crane had proved that there had been naught but honor in his mind; and she had tried (which she had sometimes found dangerous) to make him feel that it *was* a delight to know her.

"I wonder if I tried too hard—too tumultuously?" she murmured, staring out where the morning rode kingly upon the sea. "'My name is Eton Troit—in Isle de Oro!' . . . He could n't lie to me; and yet he took the chance of murdering an interesting relation! I wonder if he thought me rakish—for not minding his alias?"

She laughed heartily now for two distinct reasons: first, because she happened to think of Giddings at that moment; and second, because the man with whom her human ideal was identified was wanted by the police of all the world for stealing one hundred thousand American dollars. The former reminded her of a communication received the last moment before her steamer left Savannah. She read it again now, in the knowledge which Isle de Oro had furnished so far.

I have been singularly stupid about this man Crannige [Giddings had written]. When I first read of his disappearance incidental with Crane's, I recalled the face of Crannige as I had seen it once behind the wicket at the Bank of All Nations. It stirred up something in my mind which I could not straighten out then. I have kept the wires hot between here and Utah, where Crannige came from, and finally located a man out there who put me wise to what I should have remembered—that the young man is a gambler. Out yonder he was known as Anthony Regan and was one of the slickest sharps in the region. It all came back to me that I had met him for an hour at Crandall's, in Chicago. Here I have to tell you, without any pride in the matter, that I am some artist with the paste-boards. This Crannige, alias Regan, took what I had, and so smoothly that I was unable to say that he did it crookedly. In fact, he is the niftiest article that I ever expect to encounter at a *bank*. All this to suggest that you are apt to find him in the big games at The Palms.

I enclose a newspaper reproduction of a pen-sketch of Crannige found in Crane's effects. It may help you to identify him. The gambler has left no photographs behind. I have since met a man who was fleeced in the rooms of Crannige. The young man is a wizard. There are other wizards in Isle de Oro. Ho, for the battle-royal! Given time, however, there is but one end to the hundred thousand, at least to the share of Crannige. Isle de Oro will get it some way.

I have not been able to learn that Crane has any particular madness for *chances*. I am sorry that my plan of proceeding in the island did not appeal to you.

Miss Mallory glanced carefully at the likeness of Crannige and put it away with the letter. "Poor little Giddings—how earnest he is!" she commented. "Queer, I did n't see Crannige anywhere yesterday! . . . I wonder if I really should have been less eager—if I frightened the gambler by becoming so suddenly friendly with Crane? Perhaps I had better avoid poor Crane to-day. What will he think? . . . If I could only tell him the whole thing!"

She left the window at last with the morning light vivid in her eyes, and seemingly virile in her limbs, for she whisked out of the room and down to breakfast like a child all a-tingle with the joy of living. Crane was pacing gloomily up and down before the stair-case.

"Good morning," he said.

"Gorgeous morning," she replied.

The lobby was empty, not even the manager being at his desk, but Crane spoke in a tone so low that it would have been inaudible five feet from his lips: "After you have breakfasted, may I have a talk with you—not long?"

"Of course. You look worried. Is anything serious—"

"No, just a puzzle."

She nodded, and allowed him to overtake her an hour later on the gravel pathway leading to the main gate.

"I have been ordered out of The Palms," he remarked.

She could only ask the reason, divided for the instant between what she wanted to say and what might be unwise.

"I can't tell you the story altogether," he declared. "I never was quite so stumped in my life, and I am afraid I'm about to begin wrecking things. I don't see red very often, but this is a peculiar case. You and I got on so mighty well together last night that I did n't want you to think me a ruffian for going away without a word. Besides, you might see me in war-paint by accident some time in the next week, and it might look odd to you."

She felt the huge rage stirring in the man; and yet was seething with mirth at his expression of it.

"It is thoughtful of you," she began chokingly, "to spare me from finding you odd in war-paint—by accident—some time in the next week."

He regarded her merriment with fine appreciation, and turned the point of her apologies almost before they were uttered. "It is n't that I want you to take seriously at all this puzzle of mine, but I could n't let you think that I took our acquaintance so lightly as to leave without an *adios*."

"Is it quite impossible, Mr. Troit, for you to tell me anything about all this?" Her appeal was penetrating.

"I came down here to find a man in The Palms," he said hastily. "He is here, but, it turns out, he does n't want to see me. My efforts to get at him have made our Spanish host uncomfortable, so I am to vacate at noon to-day. It really is coming to me to have a session with this man, though I may have to start a revolution to accomplish it. But I won't bother you any further! I only want to ask you to suspend judgment on me until—"

In a flash came back to her mind Yuen Chen's compartments, the thin, blue-painted partitions, decorated with frost-tipped volcanoes; and certain words he had uttered there.

"Until the returns are all in!" she finished quickly.

The phrase aroused him, but did not carry him back to the stub of Manhattan.

"I won't do it, Mr. Troit," she declared eagerly. He withered in spite of her tone, and she hastened to finish: "I'll hold my present judgment of you. It's good and flawless so far. I don't know much about Isle de Oro, but I do know that men are not turned out of The Palms because they are wanted in northern penitentiaries. Why, it's a laugh and a scandal among the nations—the kind of men who are at large in Isle de Oro."

"I should n't have thought of asking so much. Honestly, Miss Mallory, you're the rarest lady on short acquaintance, I've ever met."

"Short acquaintances are horrible—I mean, when you start to build a splendid superstructure and find that the foundation is soft, chalky, and giving way! . . . But tell me, Mr. Troit, can't I help you in any way—even to putting on the war-paint? I don't expect to start back to New York for a fortnight, at least."

Gloom filled his eyes. She reflected that it was n't kind of her to mention New York. She knew what it would mean to *her* to be forbidden from that marvelous trophy-room in the house of the world. And he was forbidden, and might be for all time, if he failed in this lone war of his. . . . Was there any added gloom because she was a part of the forbidden city?

"No, Miss Mallory," he replied lightly. "I am afraid that you can't even see that my war-paint is on straight. It is enough if you do what you have promised already—think of me as good and flawless, which I am not, but until I show you at least that I am cruel or cowardly."

"Yes, I can do that, and—" but she decided to reserve for another time what she might do besides.

"And—" he repeated.

"I only wanted to suggest that you be not rash or hasty. Oh, I

know this is always a woman's thing to ask, and that a man knows best what he must do, but I can't help warning you not to plunge. A man does n't take a walled city single-handed without much prayer and fasting."

"It may take more time than I care to think of—and time is the whole point of the issue," he told her, as cheerfully as he could, "but you may rely I 'll strike hardest—when I strike at all."

"And where are you to be in the city below?"

"At the Treasure Island Inn—where, I regret, I cannot receive a lady."

"I was quite sure of your not being able to entertain at random in the city below," she said laughingly, "but it may be well for me to know just where you are."

Crane pondered this long, afterward. "I thought at first that—it was presumptuous—that my being ousted might not prevent our meeting altogether. It occurred to me that we might saddle together some afternoon. I see now that it would be all wrong. It would make your standing at The Palms precarious."

"I was equally presumptuous, because I thought of the very same thing at first; and then it came to me that it might possibly complicate *your* campaign." She touched his arm suddenly, a light but thrilling pressure. "We can't be too careful. I am going to help you if possible. We had better not walk back together. I shall go into the gardens now. . . . Good-byes are hideous—*auf wiedersehen* and all is good in the world."

He watched until the foliage closed about her. An hour and a half later Crane passed out of the gates, never to enter them again, at least in the scope of this narrative. He tried later in the day, following a queer impulse of deviltry, but a servant stopped him, observing that if the Señor had forgotten anything, it would be brought to the Treasure Island Inn.

"I became curious in passing to find out if you were here on my account," said Crane. "By the way, you may bring to my quarters below a gentleman named Regan. He will no longer be confined to his room, I believe."

IX.

WITH Crane out of the grounds, and a guard set at the gate, Celestino Rey was helped to the apartment occupied by Crannige. He felt that there was less grinding now in the affairs of his establishment. Crane had been the foreign substance in the machinery. For days the other—the austere, impatient Regan, with a head like an Indian god's—had been covered and closeted and whipped about here and there, through passages which opened only in the hour of peril, as the mouth

of the mother snake to her young. He had lived in a room with a vestibule and admitted no one, except after compelling a repetition of a carefully prepared signal. Under no conditions had he ventured out of doors.

"Is not your friend singularly astute," the Spaniard inquired, "to have followed you directly to The Palms, out of all the rest houses on the world's highway?"

"Astute?" Crannige said impatiently. "I told him I was coming here. It was the rawest thing I ever did. He really had been good to me in New York—had 'phoned frantically all the afternoon I left. I know him well enough to understand that he would n't give anything away, but I did n't foresee his following. There was no need of that. How could I know that he would come here and meddle?"

"I have noted that he is an unusual young man," the Señor remarked—"unusual enough to be unsettling. Why do you not get it over and allow me to present him to you—say, now?"

Crannige jerked up, as if the man in question were waiting at the door. He noted at once, however, the amused look on the face of the Spaniard. He was somewhat in doubt as to what answer to make to the Señor. The truth would have been indelicate here. How many times has the truth appeared indelicate to divers participants in the running of these events! Crannige was riding upon the lowest ebb of his fortunes since arrival, bumping bottom, so to speak. He had lost heavily for two nights. He could not inform Señor Rey now that he did not intend to leave The Palms until he had doubled his original capital or lost all. The mere mention of Nathan Crane maddened him.

In justice to Celestino Rey, it must be stated that he quite appreciated the sensitiveness of the other at this juncture, and his aversion to brute truth. In justice as well—and here is a matter which Crannige apparently overlooked—the Spaniard had no intention of allowing the other to double his original capital and get away with it. He considered life too arduous, too uncertain, and the amenities of life too ready to dissipate, unless constantly reinforced. In various ways, Crannige was a lion-hunt to the Spaniard—sizable, desperate, and wholly logical game for a mighty nimrod. In the first place, Crannige was unlikable. So there were no compunctions; no embarrassment in so far as getting attached to one's prey—and one must consider well one's finer feelings. Second, Crannige was a supreme master of gambling chances. In his amiability, Señor Rey was almost willing to acknowledge a rival. This made the meetings of blades of such temper and polish absorbing. Moreover, Crannige was inestimably favored with funds. Fourth and finally, he could n't squeal when he was hurt; because the whole outer world, so raw and ready as it is to

add to the infinite examples of man's inhumanity to man, was waiting for just such an outcry in order to pounce upon the squealer.

"It is out of the question, Señor, for me to see Crane now," Crannige said briefly.

"I believe it would be rather a nuisance to find him any way," the Señor replied with a yawn. "He's gone from The Palms—sailed away north this morning."

Crannige caught the other by the shoulder eagerly. "Sailed away north this morning?" he repeated.

"My dear fellow, you are free to move anywhere—although I should hesitate to leave the grounds yet. I brought this as a delicious surprise to you—as a sign of my affection. Seeing the tension you were suffering as a result of his presence, I hastened to you with the good news."

"Oh, I am grateful, right enough. No doubt about that," Crannige said thoughtfully.

"But you seem troubled still."

"If I know anything about this man you speak of," the American observed, "it's rather an ominous sign that he's coming back—his leaving without a fight."

"We have both agreed that he is an unusual young man," Rey laughed.

"That's just the point."

"But let me reassure you." Hereupon the Spaniard gathered Crane's present difficulties into a small package. "There is nothing to fight. I am identified with every interest in Isle de Oro. I may say, I am Isle de Oro. It has been a matter of pride to me to devise means of protection beyond the conception of any guest. You are under this protection. I acknowledge that there are, among those in the city below, men who do not love me, but so perfect is my organization in the very midst of them that I should be forewarned within an hour if any one tried to incite feeling or bring any force against me. You are perfectly safe to come and go, my dear Regan, and you must celebrate with me by appearing at luncheon to-day in the Flamingo Room."

After delivering his pretty surprise to Crannige, Señor Celestino passed out, apparently in very high spirits, above the knees. From the veranda, he was assisted to a wheel-chair for a ride through his gardens. From afar, he perceived Miss Mallory standing at the south gate, and ordered his attendant to wheel him thither. The two had met on the preceding afternoon, and their mutual interest is readily imagined. That Crane had monopolized the late arrival last evening, and had sought her immediately in the morning, was by no means missed by the Spaniard. Indeed, he had given the matter considerable

attention, all his swift and agile faculties tossing and tearing the morsel, as hounds play a quivering hare at the end of the run. It may have been because he had not yet come to a conclusion, that he had omitted mentioning the matter to Crannige until after he had seen the lady again. But devious and winding, like the streets of old Madrid, were the ways of the Spaniard, and past finding out.

"I was looking over your enchanting little harbor and the yacht—I can see her name from here—the *Savonarola!*" Miss Mallory exclaimed rapturously. "Ah, she's a thoroughbred if I ever saw one! Do you know what I was just thinking?"

The Señor inclined his head benignly.

"That your yacht has the wonderfully effective lines of her namesake's profile."

"Delightful, Miss Mallory! I shall never forget the simile."

There followed a technical discussion of ships and sailing which swept the waters of the world. Miss Mallory had more than a text-book intimacy with the subject, and an enthusiasm which compelled from the Spaniard not only an invitation to sail within a few days, but an invitation to luncheon within an hour.

"Just the Glowworm—that is Señora Rey—and a few of my most cherished guests—a party of six, if you will join—and in the Flamingo Room," he urged.

"Gladly, Señor Rey. The Flamingo Room—it sounds entralling!"

"I hope you will find it so. The idea is mine, and the tint of a flamingo feather is the fairest of all tints to me, save one—which is found in the cheeks of an American girl. The feather coloring suffers in comparison, however, since it is at its best only in sunlight."

"Most pretty, Señor Rey," she replied. "I see now whose sense of beauty has made The Palms and its gardens one of the rarest delights of my travels."

After this genial interchange, Miss Mallory walked beside his wheel through the shadowy, scented paths, and they made their way in good time back to the hotel.

"The gardens are perfect in the moonlight, too," she told him. "You cannot imagine what a joy they were to me last night—so lately from a New York winter—and Mr. Troit was a most desirable companion."

"A true gentleman," the Spaniard observed feelingly. "You knew him before?"

"Yes, and is n't it strange?" she asked ingenuously. "I felt that I had met him, but did not recall the name. Then he spoke to me at dinner last evening and reminded me where we had met before. . . . I was so sorry that he was called away this morning! He had

no idea of leaving last night. It was a letter he received. He seemed greatly troubled about it."

All of which Señor Celestino weighed in the most sensitive scales of his mind. He found a balanced utterance. "She is not lying to me," he decided. "No, she is not lying to me. She is too young to be so artistic with the fine tools of untruth."

So it came about that in the Flamingo Room, incomparable in sunlight, Miss Mallory met, among others, the Crannige-Regan person, the original of the newspaper likeness which Giddings had sent. The others were the Glowworm, an olive-skinned, yellow-eyed, languid-lidded beauty who looked to the American girl as if she might turn into an explosive through certain contacts, and who came—this was spoken with a lazy gesture and a turn of the regal head over her right shoulder—"from South America"; and a man and a woman, in the full power of their years, known in Isle de Oro as the Sorensons, most refined and adorning sycophants of the Reys. Altogether, it was a little group designed to challenge the best and bravest Mallory blood.

X.

How queer it turned out! That hidden-flamed creature, Señora Rey, proved to be dying a slow death from nostalgia and the wounds of passions which had only themselves to rend and devour. It was a surprising, a pitiful thing, how she tried to leap into the heart of the girl who came. Even in the Flamingo Room, the great, slow-moving eyes settled upon her. Miss Mallory felt this with gladness and fearing. There is always a price to pay for using the emotions which live in yellow eyes like hers. That very night the woman's story was told in whispered fragments—strange concentrates of heart-hunger, hate, and mystery, these fragments.

. . . There had been a night—ah, long ago—in which Señor Rey had summoned her from her companions. It was in a house in Buenos Ayres. The Señor had come to that house before. The Señor was always obeyed. He was always feared. She nor any of her companions could taste the wine he bought for them. It did not make them laugh, like the wines of other men. Oh, yes, they drank it, but they could not taste the flavor—with him in the room. . . . On this night the Señor had bade her come with him. She could not answer, but obey only. She remembered how hushed her companions became when she went away with the Señor; how strangely they had looked at her—what helpless sorrow was in their eyes. . . . Even now the Glowworm could see the faces of her companions gathered about; the Señor smiling at the door; his carriage, with black, restless ponies and shining lights; the driver upon the seat, like unto whom she so quickly became, never answering the Señor, always obeying! . . .

Ah, yes, there had been a hush in the house as she left it, but laughter in all the other houses about; and away they had driven, past the last of the red lights—

Such was the tale, whispered, overlapped with repetitions, a succession of intimate touches lightly done, but which carried the meanings of a life in them. They suggested far more, too, these touches in a hushed tone, with the big yellow eyes hungry upon the listener as the lips unfolded them. They suggested the big South American town, as old as Europe in sin, as new as Wyoming in heart.

Miss Mallory caught it all. The woman was expiring to get back to the blows, the wines, the red lights. Only, it must be so that the *Señor* could not follow! It must be as it was before he first came, when she could taste and feel and see—when the chill had not settled down upon all her senses and the shuddering was not begun.

“But could you not go back for a visit?” Miss Mallory asked, knowing that the question was inane. The *Señora* was so physical in her intents and sensations that she overpowered the American’s mentality for the moment. Yet Miss Mallory was conscious, in spite of the full measure of pity which the other drew from her, of a creepy effect which she had sensed only once before—listening in the dark to a famous actress as . . .

“When he is dead or when he is tired of me, I shall go back—not for a visit, but to stay! I could not—I should not dare to run from him! Always I should feel him after me. There would be no sleep. I should feel him after me—you know how it is in a dream, when you are like a ghost—all limp in the limbs, but trying to run! It would be like that, and I should always expect him to clutch me from behind! . . . My God, if he would only make me mad! But he won’t—he won’t!”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean,” the Glowworm whispered, drawing the other’s head to her lips, “I would kill him. Oh, he is all but dead! I could kill him with my hands, if he would fill me with rage, so that I could forget his eyes. He is all alive in his eyes! . . . But it shall never be! He will say do and go and come and rest and rise—and I shall mind like the Chinese. . . . Oh, tell me what you would do, if he said to you, looking right into your skull, ‘Come with me to-night!’”

“I should laugh at him and say, ‘*Señor Rey*, you have drunk too much wine!’”

“If he looked at you—could you say that?”

“Yes.”

“I think maybe you could. You are wonderful. It is the first time in years I’ve talked to any one and not been afraid. I knew at once that I could talk to you, and you would not tell. I have so much

to say that has been shut up like a swelling in my throat—ah, God, so long! . . . And so you would say with a laugh, as you tell me,” the Señora went on, as if memorizing the method, her lips mumbling and trailing the words, so deep was the effort of her mind—“you would say, ‘Señor Rey, you have drunk too much wine!’ and he would say with a laugh, too, ‘It is true, no doubt, as you say. I am an old and a very foolish man, and I hope you will forgive me, my dear Señorita Mallory!’ and you would smile and think of it no more;” the Señora laughed in a soft, mirthless way. “But that very night—just the same—you would find yourself with him! And he would laugh at you then and say, coming closer, ‘Forgive an old and foolish man!’”

Miss Mallory was startled into rage at the thought. “You mean he would have me, any way?”

“Yes,” the Glowworm replied wearily. “My lord gets that which he desires—all but his youth, he cannot get that—and his health, he cannot get that—and his fear of hell, he cannot be rid of that! . . . I think my lord has no soul—and it makes him afraid to die!”

With these last words in her ears, the woman from New York faced the other breathlessly. Such an utterance from—from the red lights of Buenos Ayres—from this creature of five senses and three dimensions! Bulwer Lytton wrote a novel on a line of that meaning, and called all the mysticism that the human mind can aspire to in the making of it.

They had many talks, this pair from the mated continents. Miss Mallory had uncovered a mine of terrors absolutely new to her. She became infected with the other’s fear of the Spaniard, and a breath of this fear dimmed the lustre of The Palms and the gardens. She became afraid *for* the man down in the city—whom she dared not try to see; the man mad enough to do battle against the dictator of Isle de Oro. . . . Once she had seen Crane pass the south gate, but she could not go to him. Crannige, offering to return to The Palms for her parasol, had left her but a moment before. It was agony to her to imagine the things Crane must have thought, for his head was turned her way. Still, she could risk nothing. So little had been won; the odds so huge and many.

The Sorensens were hideous to her. The presence of Señor Rey, as no man or woman ever had before, filled her now with cold, shuddery waves of dread. Crannige had been slow to handle. They had scarcely become acquainted during the first two days. He had seemed nervous, ill as from overdrinking, preoccupied. Then all this changed suddenly. The last two afternoons he had sought her at every opportunity. He was excited in manner, spiritedly patronizing. He was only insufferable when revealing occasional symptoms which aroused

in her a crowning aversion—the symptoms of a man who feels that he has only to devote himself to the effort to become wholly irresistible to any woman at hand. And Señora Rey! Here was an object of sweeping but nerve-racking interest—a glowing, gorgeous animal all wrapt in responses to purely human touches, yet dominated by vague intuitions. She had used Miss Mallory as a vessel in which to pour years of accumulated toxins of hate and fear. For this boon she paid with a most devoted application to the creature comforts of her guest—services of her own hand, not a little sweet and endearing in their way. . . . Very late on the fourth night after Crane's forced departure, the two women were together in one of the inner family chambers at The Palms.

"You hate this American, Señor Regan, do you not, dearest?" inquired the Spaniard's lady. It was always "hate" with her. She hated the Chinese, hated the Sorensons, hated the Señor. She was lying now, huge, silken, sensuous, upon a tiger-rug in the yellow light of a shaded lamp.

"Not exactly, but he is not so interesting as some men I have met," Miss Mallory answered, "and he does not seem to improve with wear."

"That is the sort of men I am allowed to meet," the Glowworm mumbled languidly, her eyelids drawn against the light. "But I have no choice—no choice here! . . . Still, I do feel a little sorry for him."

"Why, Señora?"

"He is alone in a strange country. It is dreadful to be young—and alone in a strange country." She laughed in the softest fashion and opened her eyes full upon the other.

"You mean something which you have not said. I should like very much to know," said Miss Mallory.

"This Señor Regan is a very great artist—greater than my lord. He is winning my lord's money—oh, in fortunes—for two nights—and to-night, I doubt not." She laughed deliciously. "My lord cannot tell how it is done—and in his own house. My lord does not sleep. Oh, it is not the money that keeps him awake. It is that he has met his master—in his own house—the place he has prepared."

"But why are you sorry for Mr. Regan?"

"It is the privilege of my lord alone to win fortunes in his own house. Did he not build the house?" The yellow-lit silks shook with her merriment, and she beckoned the other's ear to her lips. "They are playing now. I will risk murder, my dear one, to show you some things about my lord's house. . . . Would you like to see the two men together?"

"Oh, please——"

"You see, I can refuse you nothing! I love you for coming to me. I am a woman again—even young and glad. Before you came I was a snake crushed at mid-day—that could not die until the dark! . . . Follow me."

Miss Mallory was led through several inner rooms which the Spaniard reserved for his own use. They crossed the main hall then, and entered a corridor which the American girl had not noticed before. No lock was discernible upon the face of the door, and the *Señora* seemed but to touch the panel to open it, yet it closed of itself with the sound of a lock indeed—a heavy, oiled, smooth-running click. The corridor was narrow and dim. It was high, but the thickly-veiled lamps were far apart and close to the rugs, so that one's shoes were lit, but the face hardly recognizable. Low voices mingled in a bewildering complication throughout the corridor. There was a sliding ladder with carpeted steps, large enough for two to stand on the top, which could be moved noiselessly to any point on the wall. An arrangement similar is used to reach the upper shelves in public libraries. The Glowworm pressed her companion's hand repeatedly to insure silence, and slid the ladder along as she walked nearly to the end of the corridor. Miss Mallory heard her quick, frightened breathing. The ladder was locked by some unseen turn of the *Señora*'s finger, and a moment later the two were standing on top. A curtain was lifted from before the eyes of the astonished guest.

Crannige and *Señor Rey* sat facing each other in a dull green room! Everything was dim, save the cards and the green-baized surface of the table between the men. The watcher did not know the game they were playing, but it was evidently a moment of great tension. A turn of a card was a signal of the crisis. The stakes were the American's, and the Spaniard leaned back and smiled.

"I surely congratulate you, Mr. Regan," he said with fine enthusiasm. "You played the hand masterfully, and the Goddess, perceiving it, swung her favors your way. For the third night she has abandoned me entirely."

Crannige lit a cigarette and smiled at him. "Are you really too tired to go on?" he asked.

"Yes, but let us talk a moment. It is sad to be old. I have learned that I must not remain too long at the table at night, since it ruins the day following for me." The Spaniard bent genially toward the other and continued, "I suppose, now, *Señor Regan*, in the high flush of fortune—that you would have no fear of meeting this friend who came to see you?"

"Time enough for that—when he returns," said Crannige. "Still, I should n't care to have him run against any of your bayonets—trying to break in here. I wish he had n't meddled."

"To-morrow night we shall have no session," said the Spaniard after a pause.

"Why not?" Crannige asked quickly.

"I am really pining for a night at sea," Rey explained. "The moon will be in full to-morrow night. It is my plan to take our original little party—that came together first in the Flamingo Room. I have promised Miss Mallory, moreover. You will go?"

"The American girl, the Sorensons, and your wife?"

"Exactly."

"Of course I'll go along." Crannige hesitated before adding, "Frankly now, Señor, what chance is there of this man Troit running into a knife below in the city—if he should come back to Coral City for me?"

The Señora was pulling at her sleeve, but Miss Mallory listened three seconds more.

"If you asked my protection, and he became rough, he might—but you state it vulgarly."

Crannige turned a troubled look to the wall, but did not reply.

The two women reached the quarters from which they had come in safety. Miss Mallory's eyes were brilliant, her face white with fear.

"Is the whole house so arranged?" she asked hoarsely.

"Mostly," the Glowworm answered, and added thoughtfully, "They must have been talking about the tall young man who was here a few days ago. My lord would not allow me to meet him. He is the kind I am not allowed to meet. . . . You will go sailing with us to-morrow night—you see, it is arranged."

"I shall be glad to go," Miss Mallory faltered. Her brain and heart felt stifled. "Did he—did the Señor mean that this other man would be murdered if he tried——?"

"My God, talk softly, dear! . . . Yes, that is, he would murder himself trying. My lord is Isle de Oro. He is not finished with Señor Regan—and means to have no interference."

"Why did you say you were sorry for Señor Regan?" the American repeated at last.

"Because he has won money from my lord in my lord's house! He will try to get away with his winnings, and *he* will run against my lord's bayonets."

Miss Mallory reached her room horrified. Remembering the secret corridor, the moving ladder, and the lifted curtain, she dared not turn on the light. She did not sleep, but in the first light of morning wrote hastily a long letter to Eton Troit in the Treasure Island Inn. When the letter was finished she put it away carefully in the bosom of her dress.

XI.

NATHAN CRANE was never able to contemplate with calm that hundred-odd hours which he spent in the lower city. Treasure Island Inn was about as complete a contrast to The Palms as one city well could furnish. The former was not so wretched in the sense of money-lack as in its moral poverty. Its evils were so open and self-reviling; its passages so angular, so suggestive of blood-drip and brooding horror; its rooms so peeled, meager, and creaking; its depravity so sincere! Crane had to acknowledge that he preferred the refined, glittering deviltry of The Palms. Let no one think that crime had been spared about the world to furnish its living actors for Treasure Island Inn! All the ragtag, with not a lust nor mannerism missing, was there; only, Crane had not come to the island to study social sub-strata. Mingling with the types of human squalor angered him, because it was forced. Señor Rey had made him one with the lower city—a superfluous type.

The city took little interest in him—regarded him as already plucked. He had been found wanting up at The Palms, and had slid back, an evil fate, indeed, through which his standing suffered. Far better had he come directly from the ship to the Treasure Island Inn. As it was, he was held as a would-be swell in the red-rimmed public eye, not slick enough nor flush enough to get away with it. There was another chance, of course,—that he had “come for somebody,” and that old Celestino had nosed out the fact. In this aspect, he was not a worm, but a viper. Isle de Oro stood together against the outer world, but kept its hand in with interneccine engagements. Four days netted him but one friend in the city. This was old Monkhouse, a desperado in the sere, shaking for the need of a drink which Crane supplied and many more. It happened that Monkhouse served him well in restraining his impetuosity, through blood-chilling suggestions of the Spaniard’s power and extent and abandonment.

“ You’re a swate lad,” he communed. “ I belave in you t’ th’ seeds an’ beyant. Celestino—an’ may Hivin deefin th’ walls as I sphake ut—has nine-an’-sivinty ways av makin’ off wid you. Faith, bhoy, I’ve known th’ day in these seas whin he’d do ut f’r the love av practice. But he’s ould now, an’ tinder av heart. He laves ut t’ your good sinse to lave him alone. ‘T is well you trusted no wan save ould Monkhouse. Adhere to ut, lad, or I’ll be mournin’ wan av these gay mornin’s wid you gone—an’ your name on no passenger-list save—what’s th’ name av that divil av a pilot—Charybdus?”

“ Charon? ”

“ Thru’ f’r you, lad. Charon ut is. What wid th’ dhrink an’ th’ sinful climate, I’ve forgot much that manny niver knew! ”

Monkhouse winked his red, lashless lids, and meditated the while,

as he pressed the juice of an orange into a third of a cup of white rum and stirred in a handful of soggy brown sugar. "Hark t' you, bhoy,—come closer," he whispered presently. "Nothin' that sails in these par-rts can scrape th' paint av th' *Savonarola*. At the same toime you can do nothin' be stayin' ashore. What's th' poozle? 'T is this, lad: you must git wan av thim gasolin' la'nches that move like the devil an' smell like th' shleepin' sicknus! An' you must git her from wan av thim other islands betchune here an' sundown. . . . Listen, now, come back here in good toime, sthandin' on your own deck, wid ould Monkhouse f'r a mate, an' t'ree or four clane-eyed American bhoys lookin' f'r advinchures—an' hang out to sea waitin' f'r th' *Savonarola*. God save th' da-ay whin he comes! We'll meet him on th' honest seaboard in th' natural way, where he can't take The Palms wid him nor the slather av yellow naygurs that lives off th' cold shweat av him. . . . But I'm gettin' loquenchus, sure."

Hereupon Monkhouse drained his cup, a sign that a sirocco had swept his throat.

"I never saw an outfit like this Isle de Oro, Monk," Crane remarked without irritation. "Every time a man begins to get interesting on any subject, he jerks up like a hooked fish, and peters off into a sick whisper about huckleberry-time at home."

"You'll not see the loike av this same Isle de Oro on th' exteerior av th' globe, me lad—an' hell can't match us f'r climate, I'm tould. Many's the man's soul has filtered up through salt-wather on these shores, because he talked less av his memories than his throubles, sorr. . . . My Gawd, lad, t' have Celestino in th' hould undher me feet, as he wanst had me—but let that pass!"

There was a long pause after this.

"Hark t' you," the old man said suddenly, his eyes bright with passions which still clung to the skirts of memory. "It can be done. You're called t' the wor-rk, lad. You've th' clear eye, th' laugh av a man, th' stren'th an' th' grievance. I knew ut. A laugh like yours makes f'r a man. What have you done here in four days but walk th' flure an' study me an' th' rest who are not the loikes av me? What would you do here in four toimes four days more? Th' Spaniard does not sthep down among us. You can't go there. Th' man you want may be there, an' thin, again, he may be lyin' undher th' *Savonarola* wid th' fishes tuggin' at his carkiss! Ah, 't is deep fathims undher th' *Savonarola*, me lad, an' th' man you want 'll know thim well—if he crosses Celestino. You must meet him at sea, in a craft av your own, bhoy, an' that's th' pit av th' question!"

Crane came to believe in the old man and to dwell with seriousness on the plan of slipping away to one of the islands, to return unostentatiously with a craft of his own. He had even gone so far as

to acquaint himself with the sailing-craft that touched San Juan, Porto Rico, in their trading around the islands. The Spaniard had no weakness on land. Why not wait for him at sea? With Rey captured, he could demand Crannige and his losses for a ransom. "Why not? I'm an outlaw already, so long as I don't communicate with Gage, Green & Co.—and I can't do that so long as there's a chance," he reflected. "It would spoil it all—as Miss Mallory said. God! I wonder how she got so close to me!"

Thoughts of this woman softened the blaring harmony of sea-fighting and insular disruption. He was all breathless and spent from hungering after her. It was a mature, irrevocable thing now—how she had left the highway, where pass the women of the world, to enter his most intimate environs and possess him entirely. Their three meetings were to him the dream-stuff for a life. . . . If he could have only a look or a line from her before setting out on the Monk-house idea! Could it be that she knew *The Palms* so well, and had partly surmised the work he had to do, that she did not venture a look or a line, lest she hurt his cause?

Then there was a chain of utter misery, the links of which were forged of such as these: Did she have more than a laughing care? Was he not merely a part of a playful episode? Why should he expect a look or a line? *Why was she at The Palms?* . . . Often he was flogged with this chain. If the power had been his, he would have plucked such thoughts from his brain, and the fibres which formed them—a foul, red reptile whole. Possibly he could have mastered them, had he not one day seen from the south gate Crannige walking with her in the gardens; seen Crannige slip back towards *The Palms*, probably at the sight of him! She had looked toward him, but had not come! . . . That fourth night he met his remittance-man on the water-front. The young man was suffering from the fact that he was sober. He had lavished his quarterly portion and stood in need of a stimulant. Crane suggested it, they sat down together.

The young man shivered. "Must be ugly living down here! Are you going to stay? . . . I heard a good thing about this patch-work of the world's slums, Coral City. You know the island is of volcanic origin. A fellow who is dead now—died here because he could n't get away—told me that among the junk which the volcano blew up to make the island was the devil's throne-room!"

Fully an hour afterward the remittance-man was saying:

" . . . Yes, it's a fact. This Regan is holding his own with the Spaniard. 'Way ahead of the game, I've heard. The two are thick—play every night—bad sign for Regan. . . . By the way, that little dame from the States has made a hit at *The Palms*. Regan devotes his days to her. I can't get rid of the idea that old Celestino

is using her somehow. She's a spanking fine woman to look at and has the manner of courts. My God! nowadays—they're none too good to go on the turf—what in—”

Crane had fastened upon his arm. “Don't go on about the lady. I say don't—that's all!”

The remittance-man stared up into the altered and ghastly face of Crane, and there was silence.

It was Crane who spoke first. “I know this is the devil of a country,” he said, “and a man tied down here forgets a lot that it's good for a man to keep with him. You're a good fellow, and did n't mean anything. You just forgot. Sorry if I hurt your arm.”

The remittance-man watched him a moment longer and then smiled, not unpleasantly. “You've sort of made me homesick, Troit,” he muttered. “I've been here some time, and I'm afraid I've lost some of my old ways of—looking at things. I'm obliged to you for reminding me. You've got good fingers, Troit. Let's feel 'em down here!”

Crane took the proffered hand and they parted.

That was the blackest night in his history, but it broke into a thrilling day. Early next morning he was standing upon the balcony of Treasure Island Inn, when he beheld a *carometa* moving slowly toward him down the Calle Real—and the flicker of a handkerchief from its side-window.

He never remembered passing through his own room, nor the halls, stairs, nor office, to reach the street-door. His heart had sent a torrent brimming up into his brain, and he was past the cognizance of common things. The dazzle of sunlight upon the glass of the *carometa* was in his eyes again. He had not seen her face at all, but the slim hand and its instant signal had forced a recognition within him beyond the need of any eye to sanction. The vehicle approached slowly, torturing him with its slowness. He saw her, but she did not appear to see him. Full sixty seconds of this would have crippled his brain—so fierce was the pain. She turned, burst into smiling, and threw open the door.

“I am tremendously glad to see you again, Mr. Troit—why, you are looking ill!” Her voice dropped to a whisper as she added, “Quickly, pick up that crumpled letter at my foot! . . . I wish I had time to have a good talk with you, but I'm actually rushed to-day. I'll see you again, though. Good-by.”

He did not remember what he said; or, indeed, if any words had come to him. He only knew that he had received his look and his line—that his future was crumpled in his hand. He locked the door of his room, opened the letter, and entered into a region beyond dreams:

DEAR MR. TROIT:

I hardly know how to begin, I am so excited and have so much to say. Any way, Señor Rey and the Señora who is called “the Glow-worm”; a couple whose name is Sorenson; a Mr. Regan, who possibly

is the man for whom you came to Isle de Oro, and myself, will be sailing to-night on the *Saveonarola*. There will also be Chinese, probably three, two to manage the yacht and one for the cabin. I am not quite sure, but I think we are to have supper aboard. Possibly you have seen the yacht. She is about sixty feet long, built altogether for pleasure, but plenty staunch enough to go anywhere in these waters where there is always an island within a day's sail. The cabin takes up a large part of the hold. It is beautiful, as are most of the material possessions of the Spaniard. There are two doors forward from the cabin. The one to the left opens into the galley, and the one to the right into the forecastle, where there are three berths for the crew, the ship's stores, big piles of cordage, tackle, chains, etc. The berths will, of course, not be occupied this trip, as we plan to be out only a few hours and the sailors will be on deck.

There is a fine place for concealment in this forecastle, especially beneath the lower bunk on the right side, looking forward. There are numerous bedding-rolls wrapped in tarpaulin lying about, which could be pulled in after one. The difficulty will be in getting aboard. There is but a single companionway to the cabin. This is of course kept locked. To-day, however, there will doubtless be a servant aboard, making ready for the sail. A considerable quantity of provisions will be boarded, as Señor Rey is a bountiful entertainer. It may happen that the Chinese, in loading the provisions, will leave the cabin unlocked as they go to and from the cliffs. Here a chance may be offered.

The undergrowth is very dense on the steep walls which jut down to the cove. One might conceal oneself in this and await the offered chance not more than twenty or thirty feet from the cabin-door. This is really the discouraging part of the whole preliminary, but I may be able to assist further at the proper time. There seems absolutely no other way to arrange an interview for you with Señor Rey (and Mr. Regan). The Palms is hopeless to you. It is almost certain that your life would be forfeited if you tried to force proceedings here. This has been terribly impressed upon me.

The Spaniard's systems are colossally infamous. Mr. Regan has been winning great sums from him, but I am assured that he will never leave The Palms alive with his gains. Nor will you nor I quit Isle de Oro in the flesh—if this letter should fall into the hands of any of Rey's innumerable agents. There is operating in the city as well as in The Palms as perfect a system of espionage as one could encounter outside of the secret service of a formidable nation.

But to return: Safely secreted in the forecastle—shortly after noon possibly—one could not fail to hear, some hours later, a signal tapped on the deck forward. This signal would come after supper, when it was dark, of course, and when everything is most propitious on board. It would be well, for instance, that the party be separated at the time, say half above and half in the cabin. The signal will be three double taps—"tap-tap . . . tap-tap . . . tap-tap"—given sharply, unmistakably, with a heavy cane or something of the kind.

Emerging then from the forecastle, properly armed, one should have the occupants of the cabin rather neatly at his mercy. If the affair there could be attended to quietly enough, one might even

continue to surprise the deck party, but let us not rely too far upon fair chances. There is a strong flavor of danger about the *coup* at best. I do not count myself against you; nor am I considering here any aid which I may render; so that you are one against eight—three white men, three Chinese, and two women.

I have reasons for helping you. Let that suffice for the present. Let me impress upon you: Take every precaution; think out every possible step before joining action. These men will murder. Sefor is one of the most cultivated criminals manifesting to-day. Sorenson is a big unknown. I am afraid he may prove dangerous. Regan will be cornered. The Chinese are Chinese. To be successful, you must strike first.

I take pleasure in placing this before you, Mr. Troit. It is outlandish and full of peril; and yet I think that you are eager for such a chance. I am praying that I may get this to you without being discovered and that all may go well. The *Savonarola* carries two small boats. In case the surprise is successful, these boats may be very useful in cutting down the party. Thus it may be possible to eliminate the Sorensons and the Chinese, who make me feel creepy. It occurs to me that handcuffs will be valuable, and pistols, of course. A little red chalk-mark on the white rim of the companionway, as you steal in, will inform me that you are aboard. Possibly I shall know without it. You will laugh at many of these explicit suggestions, but let it be known that I have thought of nothing else since midnight. I am

Yours in excitement, but not without hope,

ADITH MALLORY.

P. S. I know what you can do.

XII.

BEHOLD, now, a male figure worth reading about—one Nathan Crane, no longer in bondage; no longer an irresistible attraction for outrageous fortune. He has nothing to do now but to take a ship single-handed; then to sit down and discuss the affair with the woman who had made it possible. . . . “*Quickly, pick up that crumpled letter at my foot!*” It is a command from the Top to him, and leaves the world his for the taking. . . . “*I have reasons for helping you!*” He asked no more of glory, and strode the room with the strength of young lions in his limbs, a big, fair-haired, shining-eyed, enamored fellow, positive that his enemies were preparing to pocket themselves for his attack through the strategy of the loved lady.

“Handcuffs, a piece of red chalk, and a pair of pistols—oh, yes, and a sandwich!” He stopped short in his striding, suddenly gone bereft and blood-drawn.

“Suppose she is a detective!” he muttered. “What an inspiration of hers—if she is! To get me off the island—on board ship—under battened hatches, sailing for an extradition port—officers there to take me back to New York!”

Very slowly he started to walk again. The color came back into his face in patches. A smile settled down and expanded. Finally he was straining Treasure Island Inn again with his stride, beating full-powered up and down the room, everything but victory shut out from the joyful confines of his newly-renovated brain.

"What a cad I was to think of it!" he panted. "But I'll explain to her it lasted only a minute, and that I was all unstrung from the past few days. She'll forgive me. . . . If she's a detective, I'm going to go along with her! . . . Think of her wanting to take me captive and suggesting that I bring pistols!"

Crane fastened up his baggage and halted with the last buckle in his hand. He was pondering upon the advisability of using old Monk-house. There were many difficulties; his age, bulk, softness from dissipation, and the trouble of getting him aboard unobserved. "No, I'll play it alone. It's safer, and she insists upon my taking every precaution. Poor old Monk, he did me a good turn in keeping me scared for four days until the letter came. I'll fix him later—the only friend I've got in the city—man-friend—and the only friend up in The Palms—a remittance-man!" He grinned cheerfully, and yanked the brass tongue of the buckle into the last hole of the leather—taking sheer joy in the stiff jerk of his muscles. "Yes, I'll fix old Monk later."

Pistols! There were guns of every make in the world in Coral City, but not a pair of handcuffs on the island. His nosing about that morning for wrist-irons became one of the classic jokes of Isle de Oro. Crane had a man's size gun and purchased another; also a piece of red chalk. The sandwich matter was forgotten until the last minute, when he reflected that darkness was nine or ten hours away. He had no intention of reaching the *Savonarola* by the direct way, up the Calle Real and around the hotel-grounds, on a precarious mission like this. Instead, he made a detour wide as a Japanese flanker—down to the water-front; thence south past the farthest huts of the city; then across the knuckle of the big finger of land, which formed the southern breakwater for the harbor, to the southern shore of the island.

Then he made his way east to the mouth of the cut, in blinding heat and upon sand white as paper and hot as ashes. It was eleven in the forenoon when he reached the entrance to the cove. The muscles of his face were lame from squinting in the vivid light, and he was already athirst. There was not a human being in sight on either length of shore, nor upon the area of the quick, almost cliff-like ascents. The cut was a freak, narrow as an arcade and sprung sidewise on the face of the sea-front so as to be invisible from the open. The world was silent, except for the little languorous wash of the waves and the breathing of a baby-breeze in the foliage that covered the nakedness

of the cliffs. The man was drenched in perspiration, and chafed from his hardware, not at all happily to be carried in limp linen clothing.

He turned into the density of thorny undergrowth which lined the western wall of the cut, and made his way around its devious curvings, silently, leisurely as a snake. The growth was so dense in places that he had to crawl. The heat pressed down upon the heavy, moist foliage and drained him like a steam-room. From the mouth of the cove to the moorings of the *Savonarola* was about five hundred yards, the inlet running curiously like a Malay crease with an interrogation-mark for a handle. This distance consumed an hour and some of the Crane vitality. He lay panting at last in the smothering thicket fifty feet from the rear-deck of the craft.

Some one was already aboard, for the cabin was open. The sliding-hatch connected with the heavy upright door, so that a single lock sufficed for the cabin, which opened onto the after-deck. The still, deep green water of the cove drew Crane's eyes constantly, and kept the thought of his thirst alive. Queerly the words of old Monkhouse returned, "Ah, 't is deep fathoms under the *Savonarola*!" He slipped a little steel key from the ring, smiling because it was the key to his rooms in New York, and placed it in his mouth. It started the saliva and he was easier.

There was but one man, a Chinese, in the cabin so far. This fact Crane ascertained through the ports. He was sweeping out most industriously. The waiting was evil to bear. Each moment might bring other men. Crane was staking on the chance of stealing in while the boat was being provisioned, but it was a desperate outlook, as there might be two or more for this task. It is true that he might have boarded the craft now and surprised the man in the cabin, but he would have had to kill the Oriental for the secret to be kept, and he did not care to begin this way. He did n't see red yet. Besides, the man would be missed and the ship searched, even under the bunks in the forecastle.

There was just one other way—a dangerous, forlorn last chance. If he could not get aboard in the daytime, he might creep back to the entrance of the cut where it was narrowest, and wait on a sheltered ledge there, for the *Savonarola* to be ejected with pikes from the crooked mouth. Any man could leap on deck from the land, but the whole party would be above at such a moment to meet the open sea. It would be one against eight, indeed, and the noise might reach The Palms—a desperate, ugly chance surely, in which Monkhouse would be valuable. He was impossible now.

After an interminable period—it was nearly one in the afternoon—the Chinese appeared and sat down on the low rail aft, wiping his forehead. "I don't wish you any harm, little yellow man," Crane

muttered, "but you 'd be most accommodating to fall into a dead faint for, say, twice sixty seconds."

At this juncture the Heaven-born interposed. Crane was startled by a clapping of hands from somewhere up the winding steps toward The Palms. The Oriental leaped up to listen for the signal which China-boys answer the world over. The precious hands were clapped again and then the voice:

"Oh, John, won't you come up here a moment? I 'm afraid to climb down all these steps alone, and I have a package to put aboard for to-night!"

"Think of the unparalleled genius!" breathed Crane.

The Chinese comprehended and stepped ashore quickly. Crane was not in doubt for an instant and began to roll downward through the undergrowth with the first movements of the Oriental. He felt nervously about for the red chalk, but it evaded his fingers. He did not know whether he should need the red mark, but jabbed his finger savagely upon a thorn to be sure, and muttered merrily, "One is never without a bit of red." At the base of the bank he turned his eyes upward. The Chinaman was plodding up the stairs right winningly, and the woman held his mind occupied with encouragements.

In the flicker of an eyelid, Crane leaped over to the deck and sank into the cabin of the *Savonarola*. From the shaded, roomy quarter then, he ventured a last look upward. John Chinaman's broad back was still toward him, and the woman was laughing. "How good of you!" she told him. "The steps looked so many and so rickety, and I was all alone. Here 's a *peso* for you, John. We 're coming aboard at five o'clock." She laughed again.

"What a glory to shine on a man!" Crane whispered worshipfully, as he wiped the blood from his finger. There was no need of chalk or red pigments, for she had laughed at the sight of him. John turned back with his parcel, and Crane passed through Señor Rey's sumptuous cabin to the forecastle, entered, and closed the door.

This was Adith Mallory's especial afternoon and evening. She was emphatically alive. One of her dearest desires, and one which had long seemed farthest from her, was to do some big thing for the man who had once wrought a splendid bit of action for her. This was now in the process of fulfilment. The plan was hers—every thought of it. Her dynamite was safely stored in the hold. The joyful party, of which she was the blithest of all—ah, how she loved sailing!—stepped on board on the stroke of the hour. Crannige with his fortune and his big winnings was here, open to fire like an army upon a plain. Lo, here also was the Spaniard, king of Isle de Oro, beguiled from his throne and helpless upon a floating Elba. Here the Sorensons and

the Chinese—mob-stuff. Yes, there must be a mob in every drama, volatile but bewildered, dangerous, if aroused, as an unleashed cannon on a pitching deck, but mere manikins in the wiles of strategy. Poor mob—its head was in her lap, to be shorn like Samson. And the Glowworm—that incomparable animal facing the south, her great, yellow, smoldering eyes filled with the dusky southern sea, and who knows what red lights of Buenos Ayres flitting across her dreams! Had there been desperate need of an ally, Miss Mallory felt almost as if she could have trusted the *Señora*.

"We did not care to heat up the cabin from the galley," declared the Spaniard as they descended for supper, "so I have had our repast prepared at The Palms, save, of course, the coffee. You will not miss for once an entrée, nor mind a cold roast fowl, I am sure. There are compensations."

"Mind it?" offered Miss Mallory. "I could live a week on pickles and lettuce leaves—to stay at sea in such weather!"

"Astonishingly fine sailor is Miss Mallory," the Spaniard enthused. "She talked ship with me like a pirate, and knew my little *Savonarola* from boom to steering-gear at a glance. You must all thank Miss Mallory for our little excursion to-night."

The lady in question glanced at the forecastle door and wondered if it were proof against the voices in the cabin. "How pleased he would be to hear that!" she thought. That last hour before action was filled with furious moments to her. By no means did she wing steadily across the zenith of unqualified hopes, but plunged often into abysses of terror, at the thought of the lions in the way. She had not rested well for days, and had not slept at all the night before. She imagined that there was a hysterical note in her voice; and it seemed to her as if the great yellow eyes of the Glowworm regarded her from time to time with a queer, contemplative scrutiny.

"Splendid little craft for a honeymoon," Crannige observed lightly; "that is, of course, if the lady of the question enjoyed sailing. It's funny to picture some women on a sailing trip."

"And some men on a honeymoon," added Miss Mallory.

This delighted Sorenson prodigiously. He was rather a ponderous Slav, who was not accustomed to conserve his thirst until dinner. Indeed, he had brought to the cabin on this occasion an appreciation for sparkling refreshments that had been assiduously cultivated during the day. Ever since the party had boarded, Sorenson had endangered his domestic peace by attentions, delicate and subtle as you would expect from a bear that walked like a man, upon the American woman. She broke every shaft with unfailing humor, and girded her repugnance as an added strength for the End. . . . There were many moments which she did not relish in remembrance, and the whole dinner

was a strain indeed—a strain, too, upon the thirst-mad, cramp-tortured man in the forecastle, who was not graciously allowed to miss all the conversation. However, it was a strain that pulled upon two of the finest nervous organizations that one could find anywhere in these days of complicated life—and it was over at last.

Sorenson and his wife followed Miss Mallory on deck, the other three tarrying below. The moon was rising like a colossal, pumpkin-colored clock shining from within. The breeze abaft the beam was a warm, steady pressure that coaxed a whispering of secrets from the sails, and sent the willing craft forward with her nose down to work and a business-like list. One of the Chinese was serving below. The other two were squatted aft by the wheel. The Sorensons and Miss Mallory were forward, the latter playing with a heavy cane which she had found in the cabin.

"How enticing for a swim the water looks!" observed Miss Mallory.

"It does, 'pon my word," said Sorenson.

"You are a good swimmer?" she asked carelessly.

"Ah, yes, Miss Mallory. There are many grand swimmers in my country among the coast-men."

"It has occurred to me that you must have been on shipboard a great deal, Mr. Sorenson. One can always tell by the way one acts on board a small craft. Many people are timid at first by the low gunwales of a yacht like this."

"Ah, yes, Miss Mallory," he declared, delighted with himself, the lady, and the world. He had raised one foot to the railing, and his manner became all the more nonchalant, as he raised his cigar with a flourish to his lips. "Like our host, I have sailed many seas—and not a few with him."

"The *Savonarola* is a perfect little thing of her kind," Miss Mallory observed with enthusiasm. "I believe she is staunch enough to go anywhere. . . . Just listen how solid her planking is!"

It was the moment. Madame Sorenson had turned away in disgust. Miss Mallory tapped the deck with her stick—the three doubles sharply—and moved closer to Sorenson, smiling.

"Ah, yes, Miss Mallory——"

The rest from the Slav was a briny obfuscation.

She had given him just one stiff, swift push.

With Sorenson overside, a sunburst of small but striking events followed. Madame Sorenson had not seen, but she had launched a scream with the splash. The Chinese squatted aft had not seen, but, like good servants of well-ordered minds, they had rushed to one of the davits, and were unhangng a small boat, a temperate thing to do with a man overboard. Miss Mallory had seen, but she did not scream

so as to disturb anybody, and commended the Chinese in passing, upon their prompt action—even suggesting that it would take both of them to pull such a big man as Sorenson out of the water. All this in an instant, as she sped toward the cabin-door.

Señora Rey rushed out. Miss Mallory slammed the sliding-door against the upright and swung the lock into place—just as Crannige reached it. His idea apparently was a most human and commendable one—to see what the rumpus was about on deck. The doors unfortunately detained him, as well as a voice behind—a throaty, gasping voice, yet somehow ripe with vigor.

“Hold on, Kipford,—I want you! Just be seated, Señor Rey—we must reduce the tension to a minimum on deck! . . . Ah, yes, Shanghai, back into the galley for you, boy!”

This last was to the Chinese, whose head had just appeared from his department and was returned like a throw to second by a back-handed thrust from Crane, who locked the galley-door upon him.

Meanwhile, above, Miss Mallory swept her eyes about her possession. Madame Sorenson was fighting windmills of hysteria. The Señora had stepped back against the wheel and was staring at the American girl, her great eyes, yellow with moonlight, filled with astonishment and something else—it may have been a rising flame of hope! The Chinese were riding the ripples in the small boat, now turned back toward a bobbing head from which came a curious blend of sea-water and Russian.

“Oh, I say, Miss Mallory—Miss Mallory—all well here. What’s the word above?” reached her in a hoarse but cheerful roar from Crane.

She was almost fainting in the reaction, but called back with no idea of humor: “Oh, Mr. Sorenson has fallen overboard! . . . But he can swim—he told me he could swim—and the two Chinese have lowered a boat after him!”

There was a hard-checked oath of relief, then a laugh so rich, ripping, and infectious, that it turned loose from her, as it certainly did from him, great accumulations of fret and fever and strain. It steadied her like his hand upon her arm. She joined, revelled, in it. Presently the Glowworm leaned toward her and questioned softly:

“What have you done, dearest?”

“Oh, I don’t know—but, for one thing—I think I have set you free!”

XIII.

“In the name of God——” gasped Crannige, stepping back against the door.

“And the Continental Congress,” finished the rasping voice of Crane. “Excuse me while I take a drink!”

A fresh glass of champagne had just been poured for the Spaniard as the American had emerged from the forecastle. Apparently Crane had located it with the first whip of his eye. He was covering the two men with a gun now, and his eyes never left them, but his left hand groped along the napery to the thin stem of the glass. His fingers closed upon the frail thing, lifted it to his lips, and his eyes danced with the quick ease of agony as he tossed it away.

"It may seem piratical—this thirst of mine—but there was nothing but lamp-oil in the forecastle. . . . Ho, Miss Mallory, still friendly with the ladies up there?"

"Yes, thank you," was returned. "They're picking up Mr. Sorenson all right."

"Did n't he tell you he could swim?" Crane chuckled. "I'll believe you in a minute. . . . Señor Rey, I have good reason to believe that there is nothing to hurt yourself with before the mast. I've bunked there since noon, so you won't mind stepping in the forecastle for a few moments, I am sure. The request may be a reflection upon the quality of my friendship, but it certainly indicates my appreciation of the force of your personality." This last recurred to him from one of Rey's letters.

"I never could help liking you, Crane," the Spaniard said quietly. He had been standing by the table when the American entered and had not moved.

"By the way, remove your coat first," added the American. "I regret I am not in a position to assist you."

"As you will," Rey said, complying. "It has always been my way to do a thing thoroughly."

"And now the vest."

It was done. The yellow face remained unchanged except that the pallid scar may have been a whit more ghastly. The eyes were as usual, inscrutable black brilliants. . . . The voice from above again:

"They have got him safely in the boat, and are waiting for me to put the ship about. Don't you think that would be useless—they're so near shore? . . . I'll not do it. He'll want a change of clothing, any way."

"It would n't do at all," laughed Crane. . . . "Now, Señor, just hand me that small gun out of your hip-pocket and that pretty knife in your belt. . . . Good! Now just turn out your trouser-pockets on the table—so I can see the lining, please—yes, even the little watch-pocket. . . . Gad, what a lot of money! That will do. Now pass in."

Crane opened the forecastle-door with his free hand and stepped back, never losing Crannige from the tail of his eye for more than the

fraction of a second. The Spaniard faltered at the entrance to bow politely, after which the American sprung the lock.

"Now, Crannige, I'll fix you. I'm a little impatient with you, boy; there's been so much of a lemon-tint around you of late. Don't speak until I ask you a question, and don't make any foreign movements, other than I suggest. Turn your back to me and put your wrists together. . . . Why, they're trembling! Once upon a time I thought you were bred right. . . . There weren't any irons in the city, but I've got a nice long thong."

He bound the wrists of Crannige behind in the most approved fashion, and jerked his coat from the shoulders down over a heavy hook in the wainscot. Crannige was now as helpless as a part of the ship.

"You may have some grievance, Crane," he said savagely, "but you make a mistake in going this far with me."

"I'll talk to you presently," the other said cheerfully, and called: "Oh, I say, Miss Mallory, all fixed down here. Had n't you better suggest to the ladies to come down?"

"Yes."

There were now eliminated Sorenson and two of the Chinese. Crannige was bound; Señor Rey was in the forecastle and the third Chinese in the galley, the last two under lock. . . . Something clouded Crane's eyes as he heard the bolt sprung on the cabin-doors. Her work had been responsible for all. It was incredible, and now the moment had come for him to see her, with all this history between them. Madame Sorenson was first to appear in the little companionway. Her faculties seemed routed entirely, and she gave vent to intermittent outcries.

"Really, nothing so dreadful has happened, madame," Crane said as she passed. "Your husband is quite safe."

The Glowworm was now before him, the cabin-lights full upon her strange, bewitching face. Her eyes swept the interior, rested a second upon Crannige, then turned to Crane with a smile that had a startling meaning.

"I'll stay up here at the wheel for the present," said Miss Mallory, but she bent down to look at her fellow conspirator just an instant, after the women had passed in. He reached his arm upward and found her hand.

"Poor Mr. Crane, what a day you've had!"

His white clothing was creased and grime-covered; his face and hands blackened and streaky with sweat. He had the look of a stoker who had been a gentleman once. Her eyes fixed in sudden fear upon his breast, and he looked down to the pocket, where there was a big red blotch. He smiled at her.

"No, I'm not hurt, Miss Mallory. That's the oil in the red chalk. It got sticky," he said.

The low sail-talk reached him through the open door. It seemed as if her soft continued laughter was caught by the breeze and carried up to mingle with the whispering.

"Miss Mallory," he said huskily, "you are wonderful to me."

"Please don't bother about any thanks yet," she said hastily. "There will be much time for us to talk—but not now."

He straightened up, and held his eyes almost constantly after that to the interior of the cabin. "Shall we send the two ladies ashore in the second boat with the other Chinese?" he asked.

"*You won't do that!*" This came from the cabin and was uttered by the Glowworm in a tone he never forgot—a low tone that could not be heard in the forecastle.

"No, that would n't be best," said Miss Mallory. "You see, those already gone back don't know what has taken place here, except that Sorenson was assisted overboard and was not picked up by us. They can't startle The Palms with what they don't know. I've brought the Savonarola around a bit. The wind is light and steady and she needs but little handling. San Juan, Porto Rico, is almost due west. We've got everything aboard to see us there nicely. Sending others back now might bring a steam-launch after us. Besides"—her voice dropped a little—"Señora Rey is a valued friend to us. Without her, I could not have done half so well. She does n't want to return to Isle de Oro. Madame Sorenson will be sent back to join her husband as soon as possible."

"All of which is the only way," said Crane. "I'd have botched the whole business, if it had n't been for you."

"Nonsense!"

"By the way, perhaps I had better look to the Spaniard in the forecastle. There has been no sound from there since I locked him up. He may know something about the equipment of the ship in there which I missed. I could n't somehow bring myself to tie up a cripple."

"Yes, it is best to have him under your eye, and to—watch his hands."

Crane paused at the table and drank deeply from a water-bottle which had long magnetized his eye. Crannige was watching him savagely, sweat of pain pouring from his face. The eyes of the Glowworm had turned to the forecastle door when Crane spoke of liberating Celestino. The American watched her now as he drank. In the still, huddled way she sat and in the certain fixed inclination of her head, as if to watch with an added intensity out of the corners of her eyes the knob of the door forward, she made Crane think of a cat watching

at a hole for its prey. The other woman was sunk in a large chair, quiet now and dazed from vented emotions. Crane unlocked the door quickly and stepped back.

"Come out, Señor," he said.

The Spaniard obeyed, his hands empty. He glanced peculiarly at the Señora; then turned with a smile to Crannige.

"Surely you must have done something serious to incur such displeasure from Mr. Crane," he remarked.

"I am a little in doubt as to what it is," Crannige replied, "but you never can tell what a man may do when he turns pirate."

Crane looked at him half humorously, half in surprise.

"I wonder if I might ask our host for a cheroot?" Rey suggested courteously, pointing to a sheaf of his cigars upon the table. . . . "Thank you, sir. Would you mind if I expressed a compliment for your most admirable assistant, Mr. Crane? I should like to have her hear."

"I am right here at the wheel," Miss Mallory called, "and listening intently."

"I was sailing and garnering in these waters," he declared, "before either of you men, and certainly before any of the women present, were alive. It was I who made interesting and pretty that little island which I believe is somewhere back now off our starboard quarter. Perhaps I sacked many other properties to make it so. I have met in the old days, sometimes in strategy, sometimes in open war, the most crafty and daring men which the world could send to the Caribbean. All, to the last man, I have overmatched in strength and cleverness. A ship has at last changed hands under my feet. It is well. I have lived long and am content. Only, I wish to say that it is a bright, a real pleasure to think, even if this should be my last hour, that no man, however brilliant or daring, has outgeneraled me—but the delightful Miss Mallory."

He bowed gracefully and sat down, and there was a smile from Crane for him to bask in if he cared.

"It is a tribute I shall always remember, Señor,—and one that comes from a master of his profession," responded the lady above. "As for my part, I have merely been incredibly lucky again. . . . And now, Mr. Crane and Mr. Crannige, I am all eagerness to hear you two thresh out certain matters. We're scudding along gloriously at six or seven knots, and I can hear perfectly, if you will but raise your voices a little. Nothing that you say need go any further"—they heard her laughing a little—"as we are all among friends. Shall I start you? . . . Well, one Saturday, about a month ago, Mr. Crane left his office for the Bank of All Nations with one hundred thousand dollars, which was—please one of you now take up the tale!"

XIV.

THE two Americans in the cabin faced each other. Crannige was first to speak.

"I can square it all up now—as I said I would. Won't you let me square it up?"

Crane did not answer, but stepped to the companionway.

"Miss Mallory—" he began.

"Please do as I say," she interrupted. "My part will be explained afterward."

"Won't you let me square it up, Crane?" Crannige repeated as the other turned to him again.

"Possibly, if you insist," he replied dryly. "First please tell Miss Mallory your part of the work that Saturday."

Crannige obeyed, the Spaniard watching him with an interested sneer.

"You are all right, except for certain details," Crane observed when the other paused. "I learned the trouble before Monday morning—a chance meeting with Beekman Saturday afternoon. Spent a dull Sabbath in Boston, but missed you; detained by the snow, until the story was in the papers. Also, I have n't used your confession. The steal is on me."

Crannige stared at him.

"I hope this is n't boring you, Señor," Crane said to the Spaniard. "Looting in New York is more complicated than down here."

"All departments of the game are interesting to me," returned Señor Celestino.

"Do you mean to say you never used my confession?" Crannige now demanded.

"Yes. You see, it was on me, and I wanted a little talk with you first."

"Was n't there another reason, Mr. Crane?" called Miss Mallory.

"Now, I don't want anybody to misunderstand me," he replied hastily. "Things turned out so that I had to take the blame at first. The idea is, I came down here thinking to square Crannige if possible—and to keep the full poison from his sister and mother in the meantime. It was the least I could do, as I had a little arrangement with his sister to see him through the perils of the East, and all that. Besides, I could square myself any moment I pleased."

Miss Mallory's satisfaction was evident only to the swollen moon.

"But look here, Crannige," Crane added vehemently, "you knew all about all this."

The younger man wriggled wearily in his bonds. "I'm not in a position to say anything—except you're dead wrong," he declared.

"Then why did n't you see me when I came to The Palms?"

"I was drinking. I had lost half of the money to Rey. I knew you would talk about Electra and going back. I had n't the heart to listen. I had n't the heart to face you with but half the stolen money! I did n't know you had repressed my confession—so help me God!"

"But I wrote you fully at The Palms—wrote you as 'Regan'—told you I'd help square you some way—asked you to see me, at all events."

"I never received a letter from you," said Crannige.

Crane's eyes had not left the Spaniard, from whom he demanded an explanation now.

"This is all very absorbing, I'm sure," said Rey. "I believe I did direct my manager not to deliver a letter which Mr. Crane wrote to you, Crannige. I was somewhat irritated with my manager for making one of his rare but troubling mistakes. He should have known that we could not make Mr. Crane comfortable in The Palms at the time."

"But the papers—the New York papers! They came to Isle de Oro. Rey had them with the full story by the time I reached The Palms."

"I saw no papers," said Crannige.

"They did not circulate among my guests," said the Spaniard. "I do rejoice to see things all clearing up this way. We shall be a merry company before we are done. It is rather hard on Miss Mallory, though, to be held up there alone."

"No, no. All is running beautifully here, and I am frightfully interested."

"But you have had some big winnings of late, Crannige. I've heard that you're away ahead of the game—that you won again last night," Crane said slowly.

"It's true. I'd have broken the bank here if I had kept on for a few days more. I've been ready to see you any time for the past three days, but I could n't very well—with you off the island."

"I have n't been off the island until to-night."

"Rey said that you had sailed away north four days ago."

Crane whistled. "How about that, Señor?"

"I believe it was four days ago," the Spaniard replied imperturbably. "I had too much consideration for you, my dear Crane, to advertise the fact that I had found it necessary to use your room in The Palms."

"You did n't know, then, that I was ousted—that I thought it was at your suggestion, Crannige?"

"I'm sure he did n't," called Miss Mallory, "because I heard him tell Señor Rey that he did n't like the idea of you, Mr. Crane,

running into the Señor's bayonets if you undertook to come back to the island and force your way to him."

"That's a lot better, Kip," said Crane. "You were only in bad in refusing to see me first. It was the interesting Rey, then, who was doing all this."

The face of the Spaniard was altered, demoniacal. It was turned upon the Glowworm with an expression harrowing as a dream of hell. All else was stopped—words, thoughts, even hearts. Miss Mallory craned down to see. The Sorenson woman panted as one dying of thirst. The Señora shrank back, but could not lose his eyes. Her face had a sunken, fallen look. The Spaniard was speaking—leaning forward in his chair and heaping words upon her—like clods upon a corpse.

"What Miss Mallory has just said, she could not have overheard—save for you! . . . And so I have paid Miss Mallory the one great compliment—and she has you to thank. Celestino Rey has not been outgeneraled by a clever American girl, but betrayed by a South American cat—the tortoise-shell of a *bagnio-litter*—"

"Stop that, Rey!" Crane intervened.

The Spaniard turned to him. . . . The woman at the wheel, straining downward, saw the Glowworm rise with an appalling shudder as the eyes of her lord left her; saw her body huddle itself toward him; saw her fumbling in her hair.

"My dear Crane," the Spaniard said, "I regret this domestic scene. You must excuse a man who has just discovered that his Glowworm is a scorpion—"

That was the last word of the Spaniard. The crouching figure of the woman—in the rage she had prayed for, and as she had prayed for it, *with his eyes turned away*—hurled forward like a diver. The flying body seemed huge and horrible in the little cabin. In some hideous way, it seemed as if the concentration of her weight struck him in the throat. His head whipped back like a flaunted arm. His chair had been screwed to the floor, but her weight ripped the fastenings out of the wood. Backward he was borne, beneath a stabbing, frothing creature whose cries—horrifying as some bestial mystery of the utter dark—filled the cabin with pestilence.

Crane tore her loose, and tightened upon her wrist until her fingers opened and the little knife—concealed how long in her hair?—dropped like a feather to the carpet. Swiftly, horribly, it had let out the life of the dictator. When the shaking was still, Crane spread a napkin over the face, and opened the galley-door, at the request of the woman.

"It was I—your mistress, Boy—who killed the Señor," she panted. "You may see that he is dead, if you like. Then fix him quickly so—so that he will sink. I want him to sink—sink!"

It was hurriedly done, and the place made clean, the woman moving here and there, commanding, helping.

"These people are my friends, Boy," she said at last. "They are to go with us to San Juan de Porto Rico. Then we shall go back to The Palms for one day—just one day. We shall say that the Señor is detained in Porto Rico and that we return at once. But we shall not go back to him—but to South America! I shall take you with me and be very good to you! . . . Now help as you can. First, I am"—she sank into a chair, shuddering—"I am so very thirsty. Open some wine, Boy!" . . . She looked up at Crane finally, and added in a pitiful, drawling way, "Don't look at me so horribly, but ask Señorita Mallory about it—ask her about me!"

Crane placed the money and valuables from the pockets of the Spaniard in her lap, and went to the woman at the wheel.

Presently he returned to Crannige and loosed his hands. "Excuse me for forgetting this," he remarked. "And now, Kip, I'll trade you a certain confession and a certain receipt for enough to fix Gage, Green & Co. and expenses. There's no need of my standing costs if you're flush. A man ought to pay for his own capture."

It was done in order. A hush had fallen upon the cabin.

"But you, Crane—how do you get clear? . . . I'm all bowled over about this. It is as much as life is worth to Electra—my accounts being straight."

"I'll get clear, too—and in a day," said Crane. "Listen. We should be in San Juan to-morrow afternoon. I'll cable Gage, Green & Co. the whole story—with the word that I am expressing the money to them in full. The express company will also cable that the money is in their hands and being forwarded."

"The whole story?" Crannige repeated.

"Oh, yes. . . . The fact is, I was abducted on the way from the office to the bank that Saturday—one of the most beautiful and daring abductions in history. I have n't time to outline it now, but there is n't a single discrepancy—you may rely upon it with utmost confidence—not a single discrepancy which the return of the money will not cover. Oh, it will be a seasoned, mellow tale."

"But who is Miss Mallory?" Crannige whispered finally.

"That," said Crane, "is a delicate and extraordinary question—and one which has become the mission of my life to solve. If you will be so good as to remain with the ladies here, I shall begin now."

XV.

CRANE took the wheel from her hands. "There is nothing to worry about below," he said. "We can talk now—unless you are too frightened and unnerved."

There was a moment's silence. "It would be unbearable," she whispered, "save that the Glowworm told me so much! He was unspeakable. All our lives were tossing in his hands."

Miss Mallory told him all that had transpired under her eyes at The Palms.

"It's the one high night of my life," he said in a queer tone after a pause. "But why did you come to Isle de Oro? Why did you ask me to tell Crannige another reason?"

"You see, Mr. Crane," she replied, "I overheard your last talk with Electra Crannige. . . . I could have had you caught that night. I did not tell Giddings the true story—exactly."

She told him her story now; who was Giddings and what was her own real work. There was a long, low talk beneath the gently whipping canvas. All was black upon the water behind, clear black to the lowest stars. Isle de Oro was sunk out of the tale of their lives. It was the moon's high night.

"But why did you do all this for me?"

"It was long ago and in New York. Everything I know happened in New York. I wore a white net waist and a big cluster of English violets. 'It was a cold clear night of stars,' as Stevenson says. I remember that the surface-cars ground and screeched on the frost-bitten rails. I have hated such nights since—stinging, silent, pitiless. But it was hot in the theatre—"

"The theatre?"

"Yes. The play was 'Hedda Gabler.'"

"Living God!—you don't mean *that* night?"

"Yes. It was all dark. *Hedda* was saying something about vine-leaves—telling the young writer to drink, and get vine-leaves in his hair—"

"The night of the explosion in the flies—and the fire?"

"Yes, and the faces on the stage fell away suddenly into thick gloom, and the voices melted into crazy echoes, and the curtain went down upon a squirming, thickening chaos. Then an arrow of flame from the flies touched the curtain—and its disfigurement was before our eyes—the ruin of a pictured ruin, as it twisted and blackened like a paper dropped upon the coals. Oh, I remember the lettering at the base of the curtain, as it writhed:

"So fleet the works of men, back to their earth again,
Ancient and holy things fade like a dream."

"God! don't I remember it?" Crane murmured. "Where did you sit?"

"Just in front of you. I was alone. . . . Do you remember the first scream from behind us? I did n't see the woman, but I can

remember the stabbing pitch of her voice. . . . If I were a lost and freezing traveller, the first cry of the gathering wolf-pack could not have more terror now for me. Then the snap of chair-backs and the hundreds taking up her scream! It was then that I felt the horrid strength of a frenzied crowd—then that I sensed the horrid odor of a fear-mad crowd! I was crushed to the floor.

“There were other voices from the floor—the last hideous secrets crushed with the life out of human bodies. . . . Then the lights went out and darkness hushed the screaming—only the scraping, panting, packing continued—then I heard your voice. You were above me—standing upon a chair.

“Now’s the time for vine-leaves in your hair, fellows!” you roared with a laugh. ‘Don’t pile and trample! There’s no need of any one being hurt save the poor little people who played for us. Think of them behind the stage—and don’t crush the women among you! My God! here’s the chance all men dream of—to give the lie to the yellow streak. . . . Courage, fellows; hold the ladies to their feet and don’t fight forward. There’s a woman for every man to save this night! . . . I say, men, listen to the little fiddler-man! There’s vine-leaves in his hair!’

“Ah, that roar of yours sunk into their flesh that night—as it sunk into mine! I saw you standing high upon a chair now, with the red glow from the flames upon your face. You were beating your words into the crowd—challenging the males to their best manhood. I heard their words come back to you—‘vine-leaves in his hair!’ . . . I saw the swollen veins in your neck, and I heard you laugh.

“Then it became quieter. The parquet was almost cleared, but the doors were blocked with fallen. The torrent from the galleries had jammed. I thought I was dying, but I watched and listened for you. . . . You stepped down. It was black under the seats where I lay, but your foot touched me. You groped in the dark and touched my hair, and I heard you say, ‘Damme, if there is n’t a little one left for me! But how am I going to get her out?’”

“Your hair had all come undone,” Crane said dully.

“Yes, and my outer clothing had been torn away. I was hurt and could not rise. . . . I remember that I crushed the violets to my nostrils. It was all a garish, singing furnace now. . . . I felt you lift me, and that was all I knew—until the freezing night touched my flesh.”

“The crowd outside broke open a box exit at the last minute,” said Crane.

“You handed me into the crowd and went back,” she added. “The newspapers never heard of your part. You never even looked under the violets at the woman you had saved.”

"No, I did n't see you," Crane muttered softly. "It's true, I did n't see you, but I have dreamed—awakened from dreams at night a hundred times—to find that the frail girlish figure was not in my arms, as I had just dreamed—that her head was not upon my shoulder, her fallen hair gone from my cheek and the perfume of violets out of the dream. I have tried to dream again."

"I have dreamed too," she whispered. "You have been to me all that is brave and true and tender. Oh, not for saving my life—others might have done that—but something else—possibly The Way. One night I went to sleep trying to dream, and it all came back to me again—you and all. . . . So that I thought perhaps you, too, might have read 'Peter Ibbetson'—and remembered—"

"Yes, Adith Mallory, I have remembered. I have read 'Peter Ibbetson' and I have dreamed. Since I saw you on the water-front I have found what it all means."

"You have found that there is a little one left for you?" she ventured. "But was there not something in Electra Crannige—?"

In ten sentences he placed before her the stripped truth on this matter.

"I should not have been so hard on her, had I known," she sighed.

"I'm a weird, rangy fellow, Adith Mallory," he announced presently. "All this is new and stupendous to me. Does it really mean anything to you that I have remembered a fragrance—and now dare to love the reality beyond all dreams?"

"It means so much, emperor mine, that I pity the world—so unhappy compared to me!"

And so they tarried at the helm together for San Juan de Porto Rico and beyond.

Giddings awaited his appetite in his lodgings. He was polished from crown to toe-tip and appeared to draw his leisure from the brimming wells of eternity. The morning papers were before him—all unopened save the *Express*. The cables from San Juan had been in a week and a day before, but the *Express* this morning contained the big letter from Miss Mallory—her last and greatest story. The slim feet of Giddings were cocked up upon his window-sill, and from his eyes you would not know whether he was staring at the marvellously lacquered tips or beyond into the dripping spring morning. At all events, he closed the present narrative with his musings:

"This Crane is a definite article. He is somewhat the best I've met. He is so good that I'm inclined to think he'll remain at large. For pulling results, he has founded a school beyond imitation. Look, he loots a paltry hundred thou'—doubles it in Isle de Oro—buys back his name with the original capital—sets the continent buzzing with

his fame for turning a trick on his abductors—and then cops the most valuable woman in New York whom I send to bring him in. . . . Abduction!"

Giddings laughed audibly and scanned again the *Express* story of Crane's astonishing adventures. It was a vivid, imperious, trampling tale.

"I'd like to talk to Crannige' about that abduction," Giddings mused on. He smiled silently for a while; then terminated the whole matter with the remark, "Let 'em call it a seduction if they like. . . . I drew five thousand for dropping it—and would have done it for less."

MAY

By Thomas L. Masson

ONE of the things that naturally draw us toward the month of May is the fact that it is one of the first months in the year to get particular about the weather it associates with. January is frigid until it suddenly lets us down with its warm spell; February is proverbially uncertain; March irritates us beyond measure with its perennial bluster, and April cries on our shoulders. But May has a sense of dignity, lifts up its skirts, gets warm and hospitable, and really makes us believe that life after all is worth living.

May is an artist in her way. She does not put all the finishing touches on; but she makes splendid beginnings. She gives us a sense of warmth and color, caters to our imaginations, and supplies us with those longings which only a later season can justify.

May has so many things to commend it, that to enumerate them all would fill a volume. First, she is the month in which the last of our Christmas bills are paid—also the month as a rule that is farthest removed from the autumn tax zone. Why is it, we wonder in passing, that taxes always fall due in the late autumn, just when we need all of our strength for New Year resolutions? May introduces once more to outdoors, and for this favor alone she is entitled to a blue ribbon among months.

Perhaps her one drawback is the fact that too often she makes us move. The duty of getting us moved indeed seems to have devolved exclusively upon her. It is as if she had so many other virtues, that she had voluntarily taken this displeasing duty upon herself, as if to show that perfection in this fleeting world is impossible.

A BED OF JUSTICE

By *Mary Imlay Taylor*

Author of "The Magnate of Paradise," "The Reaping," etc

THEIR wedding-day was already set when Gabriello Ginanotti and Annunziata Franzone walked along Grand Avenue, hand in hand. Their feet touched the earth, but their heads were in the clouds. The smut of railroad smoke was on the low, dingy buildings, the refuse of the market-stands cluttered the grimy pavements, and the trolley watering-car caught the small Italians in the gutters, unawares, and amazed them with a shower-bath.

What matter? Does not love make the world go round?

It was Earthquake Day in New Haven, and a little earthquake tag fluttered from every coat and kerchief in the Bowery. Aaron wore one, and Voliansky and Popolizio and Iraoff, and even the little Greek newsboys. It was Italy's day, and it was also Annunziata's. Very soon she would be a *sposina*, very soon the sacristy of St. Patrick's would behold a wedding; and such a wedding!

Many eyes followed the betrothed, for Annunziata was the niece of Beppo Franzone—Beppo the bloated aristocrat, the politician, and the "tight-wad" of the Avenue. Rumor had it that he would dower the bride.

"You believe that—you? Madonna!" Mona Lisa raised eyes and hands to heaven.

Her husband, Giorgio Maso, sold groceries in the little shop across the street from Beppo's tenement. Mona Lisa was very proud of the sign out over the door, "Delicatessen," and was herself a bustling trader, but she found time to know her neighbor, and she knew him well. She was selling roast chestnuts to the tenderfoot at ten cents a gill, and a very small gill at that, and entertaining two of her gossips, when Gabriello and the bride-elect appeared, blushed, smiled, and disappeared. Mona Lisa watched them while she mechanically refilled the measure with the wormiest nuts. With her, it was a natural science.

"Beppo! Beppo give her a dower—*machè*! Did he not tell my husband that she cooked no better than a giraffe, and he wished Gabriello joy of her?"

"Nevertheless, he gives them twenty dollars, and he buys the

wedding-dress," said Caterina Petronello firmly. Caterina was an authority—she lived in Beppo's front attic. "It is true, is it not, Emilia Bernardo?"

Emilia nodded, her broad, pleasant face softening with tenderness. "It is true."

Mona Lisa sniffed. "The wedding-dress—and you believe that?" She looked at them compassionately. "You believe that, Emilia?"

"*Si, si*, do I not know? The wedding-dress is of white satin. It cost"—Emilia looked for the effect—"it cost seventy-five cents a yard! It is true—as I'm a living woman! The veil—it is of white net, a yard wide, at twelve and a half cents a yard—there will be four yards of it—and a wreath of flowers."

"*Che-e-e*, I do not believe it! Beppo! Does not my husband say that Beppo will come into this shop and talk politics while he makes a meal out of the berry-boxes? As if Signor Roosevelt paid for the berries! Beppo will not spend a *centissimo* on a wedding-veil, not he!"

"Do I not know? I have seen it!" Emilia protested hotly.

"I desire to believe you," replied Mona Lisa ironically, "but do I not know Beppo? Did I—I myself—not see him and Annunziata and Gabriello all get onto the penny-in-the-slot weighing-machine *together*? Then, when the penny did weigh all, first gets off Beppo, and they calculate how much he weighs by what has gone, then Annunziata gets off and it is how much is gone, then what is left is plainly Gabriello! All for one penny, and"—Mona Lisa shook a denunciatory finger at Emilia—"Gabriello puts in that penny!"

Emilia shook her head mournfully. "*Poverino!* To throw away a good penny weighing Beppo. But a man in love will do anything. Do I not know? Have I not myself also been in love? Gabriello has bought a silk hat for the wedding—he will be married in a silk hat! It is so. He has also a new black suit and a boiled shirt, the bosom as stiff as stiff, and a collar. Madonna, he is lovely! So beautiful that it gives you a pain here"—she touched her ample bosom—"just only to look at him."

Caterina took a chestnut absently and shucked it. "Rizzio will not wear a collar. Once he did to mass, and he told me also when he came back that when he moved his jaws to pray it cut into his ears most terrible."

Mona Lisa jerked away the chestnuts, and as she did so Nike, the little Greek newsboy, snatched an orange from the box behind her.

"*Nike! Diavolo!* My orange!" she shrieked, shaking her fist. But Nike fled.

"The robber! These foreigners—*machè*! They will ruin the country. Have I not seen them put all spotted oranges into the

measure? The *diavolo* will get them. As for Nike"—she held up both hands—"thief, robber, may the oranges grow out of the top of his head! What was it about the wedding? *Ang!* Gabriello may be married in a silk hat. Very likely; but he will get no money from Beppo, you mark me, *cara mia!*"

Yet at the moment Gabriello sat opposite to Beppo at the little table on the top floor of the tenement. Beppo had bought the house—the old frame one by the Barnesville bridge—as a three-family house, but it was now a twelve-family one, for every room contained a family and something over, while the attic and the basement had tenants. Nike, the Greek newsboy, slept on some bagging in the cellar with the rats, and Caterina Petronello and Rizzio, her husband, had the front attic. In the little front room up-stairs Beppo Franzone drank a glass of red wine with Gabriello and sealed the marriage settlement.

There was a four-poster, with a feather-bed on it, which filled nearly the whole room and was famous in the Bowery; it was Beppo's pride, as it was to be his downfall. Besides it, there were the table, a chair, the stool on which the guest was seated, and a bit of carpet that Beppo had bought at a rummage sale. He was a small man, wiry and strong, with the look of an evaporated peach before the grime has been soaked out of the creases. On the other hand, Gabriello was young, and his handsome curly head and laughing eyes were almost as charming as Annunziata's rosy bloom.

"My son, she is worth a thousand," said Beppo genially, forgetting the cooking, "yet I give you twenty dollars as a portion."

"It is magnificent! It will help much. Already the furniture for the room has found itself. Also, I will get the ring."

Beppo sipped his wine; it was very sour, but Gabriello had paid for it. "You will find a good ring, gold, at Signor Aaron's," he suggested benignly. "It is as good as good, but a little less. He sells at auction Saturdays."

"That is true; and the wedding is Sunday"—Gabriello blushed like a girl. "Annunziata and I wish each other so well, Beppo."

"We can be young but once," sighed Beppo—he was counting out twenty dirty dollar-bills. "The business is good, Gabriello *mio?*"

"It is good. One can do no better than be a barber. Beards will grow, and hair will fall out. What will you? I rub in the tonic and the oil till the bald heads shine, and all the while they say, 'Is it growing, Gabriello? Does it sprout now, Gabriello?' Madonna, and the scalp like a marble! Oh, *si*, 't is fine to be a barber! Always they will think it sprouts to-morrow, and to-morrow next day, and so on, while you rub in the varnish and"—he showed all his firm, white teeth, his merry eyes twinkled—"they pay, Beppo!"

Beppo smiled. "It is true, they pay, the fools! When any one can cut the hair with scissors and a bowl!"

Gabriello glanced sadly at Beppo's head—it always tortured his artistic soul—but he pocketed Annunziata's *dot* in discreet silence. Beppo swallowed the red wine.

"You have saved money, Gabriello *mio*?"

"Seventy-five dollars."

Beppo licked his underlip thoughtfully. "That is good. And Annunziata?"

"I adore her!"

"So, so! I know"—Beppo nodded significantly. "I also when I was young—*chè, chè!* But the women all loved me, Gabriello. It was too difficult to choose"—he smiled consciously. "But I—"

Gabriello sneezed. Thus, at the most poignant moment, do we lose touch with our audience. Beppo felt the outrage, but he dissembled.

"You would hate to lose her?" he suggested warily.

"To lose Annunziata? I would go hang myself, so!"

"Then it is good that you do not lose her," Beppo said suavely. "I do assure you that only Annunziata or a fire could cost me twenty dollars. I am devastated!"

Later there was a tender scene on the stairs.

"Annunziata, your uncle is magnificent. He gives us twenty dollars."

"I fear greatly he will die, Gabriello *mio*. It is not like my Uncle Beppo!"

"It is but to Sunday, *carissima mia*."

"I am frightened, Gabriello!"

"*Carina!*"

Then they heard Rizzio stumble on the stairs; he was ascending circuitously to the attic. It was not a collar which troubled Rizzio, but the Signor Eisenbaum's *Yale Lager*. The leave-taking thus rudely interrupted, Gabriello descended to the door, where Nike, who had eaten Mona Lisa's orange, thrust out his newspapers with a whine. Nike could be "stuck" even with an extra, and his beautiful Greek eyes emptied many a pocket. Gabriello, who usually read the head-lines over his customers' shoulders, produced his two pennies. It was reckless, but he felt that elation of mood which sometimes causes men to light a cigar with a dollar-bill.

But for the next few days he shaved and barbered faithfully. It was necessary to pay well for such a wedding, and he was to get the carriage—that was understood when Beppo put up the twenty dollars. Besides, there were some pillows to be bought at a rummage sale. Gabriello was lucky, he got two for fifteen cents. To be sure, one of them

had a peculiar sinking caused by the extreme scarcity of feathers, but, nevertheless, it was a pillow, and, as Emilia said: " *Cosa vuola—what would you?*" One may not have the earth at a rummage-sale on Olive Street. However, Gabriello's cares ended gloriously. When Sunday dawned the room was furnished. It was beautiful, Emilia thought. There were curtains in the windows, besides a print of Pius IX, and a pepper-plant in full bloom in a tomato-can. These little touches betrayed the artist in Gabriello's soul.

The bridal carriage proceeded slowly toward the bride's home, permitting the guests and the spectators to gather and follow on the pavements. The carriage itself was a marvel, the top down and the white canvas covering fastened back and front with alternate bows of pink and blue ribbon. The whip was decorated with red, white, and blue, and a large white favor rested nobly on the bosom of Gigi, the coachman, his shiny silk hat, like the hat of the groom, being set at the angle of the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

The sky was gloriously blue. Emilia looked up and clasped her hands. "It is no longer winter; it is like summer—*sole de Jugno!*"

"*Altro!* It is just a wedding," retorted Mona Lisa scornfully, but she was wearing her best dress, her long gold ear-rings, and the black table-cover with the palm-leaf border. "Was I not also once a *sposina?*"

"And I!" said Emilia. "How beautiful is Gabriello in the silk hat. He looks like a *principino*."

"He's well shaved, *poverino*," retorted Mona Lisa cuttingly, "and he will be more shaved when Beppo is done!"

"Where now is Beppo? He should be at the door to meet us."

Where, indeed? The sumptuous carriage halted before the tenement, and the groom went hastily upstairs. In the narrow hall and on the pavement the guests and the uninvited stood in rows, children trimming the outskirts of the throng like the capers on a leg of mutton. Bareheaded, or with gay handkerchiefs folded over black pompadours, the women predominated. The Greek newsboy; Patrick O'Flannigan, the patrolman's son; Gretchen Eisenbaum and Vera Voliansky, they were all there, looking early up the crooked wooden stairs. Still no bride. Then, when suspense became unbearable, there was a rush, and Gabriello came alone. He was white, his collar had collapsed, his silk hat was awry, and in his shaking fingers was a letter.

"Madonna, he has seen a ghost!" cried Emilia. "Surely Annunziata is dead."

Gabrielle said nothing. He plunged through the crowd and ran for his lodgings. It was Rizzio Petronello who explained.

"It is good," remarked Mona Lisa, "that Rizzio is not woozy this day!"

Rizzio was not "woozy," and he explained that Beppo and Annunziata had disappeared. There was no sign of them, but a letter had been fastened on the door. It was addressed to Gabriello, and stated that Beppo and his niece had been kidnapped for ransom by the Black Hand.

"*Chè! Chè!* After all, Rizzio is woozy!" doubted Mona Lisa, eagle-eyed and sceptical.

But others were plainly frightened; the wedding guests fell away in groups. Some went up and peeped cautiously into Beppo's room. Nike, the Greek, searched the attic, and was driven out by Caterina with a clothes-pin. It was bewildering; the fact remained, however, that Beppo and his niece were gone. Gone without a word of warning, a sign, a suspicion; completely swallowed up. And who had dreamt of the Black Hand? It was a bolt from the blue. The crowd dispersed with whispers. It was an awful moment. The white-lined carriage drove solemnly away, as if it held a corpse.

Meanwhile Gabriello read the letter over and over.

If you desire your bride, you will deposit one hundred and twenty-five dollars under a stone marked with the black hand, by the barberry bushes in the centre of the third pasture from the old Protectorate. If the money is not there by Wednesday noon, she will be killed first and then her uncle. You cannot have one without the other. A word to the newspapers and she loses an ear, a word to the police and she loses her nose. Signed by the Black Hand.

Counting his own savings and Annunziata's *dot*, Gabriello had ninety-five dollars. It was necessary to raise thirty before Wednesday, and he had spent his margin on the pillows, the rose-colored puff with the humming-birds on it, and the carriage. He was in despair. If he could but bargain for Annunziata at half-price! But he must pay also for Beppo!

"T is hard luck," commented Mona Lisa. "'T is but sending good money after bad."

"One should pay less for Beppo," agreed Caterina. "Is it not that box eggs are cheaper than fresh? And could anything be so stale as is Beppo?"

Emilia laid a motherly hand on Gabriello's shoulder. "But the money, *poverino*?"

Gabriello looked despairingly around the bridal chamber. "I must see Signor Aaron; there is still this."

"*Madonna!*" sighed Emilia. "Not all these things? It is a misery!"

Rizzio appraised the furniture. "Signor Aaron will give, perhaps, two dollars," he ventured doubtfully; he was intimately acquainted with Signor Aaron.

"Two dollars?" shouted Gabriello. "Two dollars! It cost ten!"

Rizzio nodded. "There is the interest."

"Altro!" said Mona Lisa grimly. "Gabriello *mio*, is it not Beppo who is stolen, and Beppo's niece?"

"As if I did not know already!"

"Then—then"—Mona Lisa triumphed—"you will go with Signor Aaron and sell Beppo's furniture to pay Beppo's ransom!"

There was a distinct sensation.

"She is right," said Silvestri, tonsorial artist. "Beppo has furniture, it is necessary to save Beppo, we will sell his things and get the thirty dollars. You give all yours for your *sposina*; Beppo, he—"

"Is not worth the thirty," concluded Mona Lisa. "Personally, I do not desire to pay a *centissimo* for Beppo. He has treated me and my man as if we——" her bosom heaved—"as if we were insects. *Chee-ee!*"

"Beppo is a rich man," remarked Rizzio sadly, "but he is tight as tight. He will not lend a *soldi* even on Saturday night to a good tenant."

"We will sell his furniture," said Mona Lisa.

And they did—all but the feather-bed. Signor Aaron took the rest of the things away in a cart Tuesday morning, having driven a bargain that would have amazed even Beppo. He stripped the tenement, but even then two dollars were wanting, and Gabriello had to raise that sum before the next morning.

He worked hard, in an agony of anxiety over Annunziata. He was so nervous that he nearly cut off Officer O'Flannigan's ear, and yet at night he was still a dollar short. Very sadly and quietly, he took his tall silk hat to Signor Aaron's and secured a yellow ticket and one dollar.

The Avenue, meanwhile, seethed with excitement. In spite of double caution, it was whispered that the Black Hand had Beppo. Salvator Masserino closed his shop and walked by the tenement twice. Once he spat upon the pavement. There were others who grinned surreptitiously. In his moneyed arrogance, Beppo had frequently condescended to patronize his neighbors. It is fatal; the worm will turn.

Wednesday, at daybreak, Gabriello started alone upon his errand; it cannot be denied that his knees shook under him. He was even short of carfare, and walked all the way out the long Avenue. He crossed the bridges and toiled up the hill. The sun rose, the cattle stood ankle-deep in the salt marshes of the Quinnipiac, the bare trees threw spectral branches against the turquoise blue sky. He toiled up

the beaten path past the old protectorate. New Haven lay at his feet, a pink cloud pierced here and there by a spire, and lapped in the circling hills.

Gabriello crept on.

Low hemlock boughs swept his cheek, the crows cawed. He ducked below the old barbed wire and entered the pastures. In the centre of the third field, a ledge of sandstone is clustered close with barberry bushes, a mist of scarlet berries hanging in the bare brush. Gabriello approached, starting at his own shadow, and found a stone marked with a black hand. He poked the money under it and fled. Not even the thought of Annunziata stayed his precipitate rush. He bolted down the path, starting the rolling stones, and he was red and panting when he reached the bridge and dropped on a curb-stone to mop his brow.

Meanwhile, the Greek newsboy had passed a sleepless night in Beppo's cellar. Nike spoke only a few words of English and less Italian, but he could sell his papers. He was curled up on his bed of old coal-bags Tuesday night and prepared to slumber, but he could not. Strange sounds disturbed him. He got up and searched the cellar, lay down and rose again. It was not alley cats, nor rats, nor even Rizzio becoming "woozy." Nike searched diligently, and he found. In the morning he summoned Mona Lisa. Her eagle eye and her hawk nose had much weight in the neighborhood. In effect, she was a Delphic Oracle. Nike induced her to follow him. On the way Emilia joined them, and they found Caterina at the door. She was going to the Farmacia Italiana to obtain a pill—Rizzio was suffering with nausea and a head. These symptoms did not alarm Mona Lisa.

"A bucket of water, Caterina *mia*," she said sternly, "and a mustard on the stomach—very hot. Once only was Giorgio so. I cured him. *Machè*, these men! A little firmness is necessary."

Five minutes later Nike had ranged the trio before a closed door in the rear cellar. It was here that the pool of water stood, and it was very damp, besides being quite dark. Instructed by Nike, they said nothing, but listened. In a moment they were rewarded. Some one was crying bitterly in the dark.

"Madonna!" breathed Emilia, crossing herself.

Caterina retreated hastily to the stairs. Not so Mona Lisa. She put her mouth to the keyhole.

"*Ecco!*" she shouted at the top of her lungs. "Who is it that is already dead in this closet?"

"Oh, Mona Lisa!" sobbed a muffled voice. "Mona Lisa, open! It is me. Annunziata, and the rats—the rats!"

Caterina shrieked.

"Pig!" said Mona Lisa. "Be still! Nike, open the door."

Nike tried, but he was twelve and undersized. Emilia tried. "We must call the men," she gasped.

"*Chee-e-e!*" retorted Mona Lisa scornfully. "Call the moon!" and she dragged a coal-shovel from under the stairs, planted it firmly against the lock, and ran into the handle.

The old lock groaned and yielded. Another jam, and she tore the door open. Annunziata almost fell into her arms, white and tear-stained and badly frightened.

"Now, what is this?" demanded her rescuer. "Where is that *diavolo* your uncle?"

"He—he locked me in!" sobbed Annunziata. "He will kill me for telling. He was to get back the—the twenty dollars for my ransom—and—"

"And the money for your dress?" Mona Lisa turned triumphantly upon the others. "Said I not so? *Machè!* As if Beppo would pay—Black Hand indeed! Beppo gets the ransom, the hundred and twenty-five dollars, and you were to marry Gabriello and not tell?" she added sternly, staring hard at Annunziata.

"*Si!*" the girl sobbed. "He will kill me for telling, but—I was afraid of r-r-rats!"

"This," said Mona Lisa, stretching out her arms—"this is a case for Signor O'Flannigan himself!"

Annunziata fell weeping on Emilia's sympathetic shoulder. "Gabriello!" she sobbed. "Gabriello!"

At that moment Gabriello descended the cellar-steps. Nike had caught him on his return from depositing the ransom. Annunziata ran to her lover and fell on her knees. With tears and sobs she told her story. That very night at dusk Beppo would come for her, and they were to pretend that the Black Hand had released them. It had almost killed her with fright, and Beppo had whipped her to make her hold her tongue. Would Gabriello forgive her? Could he ever wish her well again?

Gabriello wished her too well to be angry. They rushed into each other's arms with tears. Emilia wiped her eyes on the corner of her apron. Caterina remembered that when she was a *sposina* Rizzio had not been "woozy." She sighed, too. But Mona Lisa stood frowning, arms akimbo.

"Are there yet any men in this street?" she demanded. "Are there yet any half-men? Beppo returns at dusk, and he has a hundred and twenty-five dollars that he has stolen—stolen. *Machè!* I wish to see a man."

"There is Rizzio," suggested Caterina.

"*Si*, and there is Giorgio," retorted Mona Lisa scornfully. "The two may make one half-man. And there is Gabriello and Salvator

and Silvestri. Not too many—it must not be known. I myself also will be present—a little firmness! But—at least, we sold his furniture!" and for the first time she laughed, her brown face puckering and her keen eyes twinkling. "It is a miracle that we got that much."

At dusk Beppo crept back along the railroad ties. He walked gingerly, like a cat on broken bottles. Inside his flannel shirt was the ransom. He had not neglected to bind his wrists with broken rope and turn his pockets inside out. His clothes were conspicuously decorated with burs, and he had a long scratch across his nose, made by a blackberry vine. He left the railroad ties below the Barnesville bridge, and climbed a back fence. Then another, and so on, until he reached his own back-yard. Here he crouched in the shadows for fully twenty minutes, but there were no sounds or signs to warn him. He slipped off his boots and started to wriggle in the cellar-window, feet first. It was small, and he wriggled slowly, sticking slightly in the middle until his legs were suddenly seized and he was yanked down and dumped unceremoniously on the floor.

He shrieked and blinked, blinded by a sudden flood of light. Then he beheld Giorgio, Mona Lisa's husband; Rizzio, Salvator, Silvestri, and the indignant Gabriello.

"Pig!" they cried in chorus. "Where's the money? We know all!"

But Beppo's amazed eyes beheld only his own feather-bed, slit open, in the middle of the cellar, and he screamed:

"My bed! What you do here with my bed in the cellar? Thieves! Robbers!"

He tried to rise, but they held him down, and began to peel off his garments as they would have peeled an orange. Beppo screamed and wriggled.

"Have you yet the money?" cried Mona Lisa's voice from the head of the stairs. She was kneeling there to secure that exit and to command the avengers.

"At last it is here!" shouted Gabriello.

"All of it?"

Rizzio held a lamp, and Gabriello counted with shaking fingers.

"All!" he cried joyfully, at last.

"Giorgio," said Mona Lisa authoritatively, "the molasses."

"Si, si, we pour it over him!"

"Thieves—robbers—murder—fire!" gurgled Beppo, under the slow and sticky flood.

"Now," said Mona Lisa, "the feathers!"

"Si, we open the bed, we roll him in it!"

"Fire!" wailed Beppo. "My bed!"

They turned him over in it, and he rose looking like a full-fledged Plymouth Rock cockerel.

"Now," said Mona Lisa sweetly, from unseen heights, "you will buy one cake of soap, Carino, to clean yourself. You will not get it with a coupon or a premium. To you it is also *six cents!*"

Three hours later there had been great rejoicings in the sacristy of St. Patrick's. Annunziata had found her wedding-dress and been assisted into it, and the ceremony was over. The bridal carriage stood now outside of the photographer's studio, surrounded by almost a mob of sympathetic spectators. Rumors were abroad, and it was known that Gabriello had been able to redeem the bridal hat for two dollars and a quarter. The carriage was again covered with white canvas and fastened with alternate bows of pink and blue ribbon; again the national colors fluttered from the whip, and Gigi's hat was polished like a new stove.

Meanwhile Gabriello held Annunziata's hand as they faced the camera. It was a thrilling moment. The white satin was gathered quite equally around her supple waist, and it stood out most beautifully; there were paper roses on the bodice, and a wreath secured the veil, which was of net, at twelve and a half cents a yard, and there were four yards in it, with a seam in the middle—feathered.

"It is too lovely," said Emilia tearfully. "It gives me a pain here just but to see it!"



THE BIBLIOPHILE

BY WILLIAM R. BENET

MY books stand voiceful on their well-worn shelves.
Their words flit silently like tricksome elves,
Weaving an incantation in my brain.
Yet what worth here to gather and to glean
The messages? For God collects unseen
And gathers book and bookworm soon again.

Does he collect of lives the rarities
Or connoisseur our souls' disparities
In his dim library beyond us there?
Then I, passed thither to some dusty nook,
May hear his voice appraise: "A paltry book—
Soiled, scarred, dull-worded. . . . Yet a page is fair!"

POLICEMAN FLYNN AND THE TAME BEAR

By Elliott Flower

Author of "Policeman Flynn," etc.

"I WAS out to see Tim Dolan a bit ago," remarked Barney Flynn, after he was sure that his pipe was drawing well. "Him an' a felly be th' name iv Cassidy r-runs a say-loon in wan iv th' towns on th' Missississ—— Devil take that wor-rd! Ye know th' r-river I 'm thryin' to say, annyhow.

"Tim was a fri'nd iv mine, but he w'u'd n't thank me f'r callin' him that now. Ye see, things was doin' whin I was there, an' he put th' blame on me. 'T is a small place they have, so th' two iv thim change off, watch an' watch, wan openin' up wan week an' closin' up th' week after, an' 't was Tim 's tur-rn on th' late watch. Iv coorse I was in th' place a good bit of th' time, talkin' politics an' fi-nance an' baseball, an' wan night Tim gets a tiliphone that throubles him.

"'D ye think ye c'n r-run the place f'r an hour?' he says. 'There 's a fri'nd iv mine,' he says, 'that 's been tuk up be a po-lisman, an' I got to r-run down an' see about it. There ain't much doin' here, annyhow,' he says.

"'I 'll thry it,' I says, 'to oblige ye, but what 'll I do if some felly comes in afther a pussy caffy?'

"'Give him a punch,' he says, an' hurries out, leavin' me won-dherin' is it a fist punch or a milk punch that he means.

"'T is not a problim that I has to settle, howiver, f'r me only customer is a man with a dancin' bear. Th' two iv thim lines up to th' bar while I 'm r-reachin' f'r th' bung-starter. It lukked to me like th' bear was tin feet high.

"'Will I make him dance f'r ye?' says th' man.

"'If ye do,' I says, 'I 'll brain ye! F'r how c'u'd I tell,' I says, 'who he might pick out f'r a partner?'

"'If ye iver touched me,' he says, "'t w'u'd be th' last act iv ye-er life. Th' bear,' he says, 'w'u'd n't stand f'r it. Give me a dhrink,' he says.

" 'I'll give ye two iv thim,' I says, 'on th' house,' I says, 'if ye'll take th' bear away peaceable.'

" 'An' a bottle iv pop f'r th' bear,' he says.

" Well, sir, I niver thought I'd come to tindin' bar f'r a bear, but I done it. I put out a bottle iv pop, an' he wint f'r it like a felly goes f'r a dhrink in a prohibition State. 'T was so comical I give him another, an' thin I got talkin' to th' man, but I c'u'd n't f'rget how comical th' bear was, an' iv'ry now an' thin I fed him some more pop.

" How it come about I dunno, but pretty soon th' man an' me was shakin' dice, an' th' nex' thing I knew I owned th' bear an' th' man had a bottle iv whisky in each pocket.

" 'But what'll I do with him?' I says.

" 'Use him,' says th' man, 'f'r to make thrade,' he says. 'Ye'll have th' city goin' broke,' he says, 'buyin' pop f'r th' bear an' beer f'r thimselves.'

" 'P'r'aps,' I says, 'p'r'aps Tim c'n handle him,' I says, 'but I'd like f'r ye to chain him up before ye go.'

" So he tuk him down cellar an' chained him at the fut iv th' stairs, an' thin he wint away an' lift me wondherin' what I'd say to Tim. F'r it begin to come over me that Tim might not be carin' much f'r bears. Some min don't.

" Annyhow, I was glad that Tim come back in good humor, f'r it give me th' betther chance to br-reak it to him gintly.

" 'I got him out,' he says. 'T is easy done whin ye know how.'

" 'C'n ye do as much f'r a bear?' I says. 'There's wan in th' cellar.'

" 'Are ye crazy?' he says. 'I've hear-rd iv bats in th' belfry,' he says, 'but niver iv a bear in th' cellar. What ye been mixin' ye-ersilf?'

" At that, th' bear begin to grunt, an' ye c'u'd see Tim's hair liftin' his hat. He r-run to th' cellar-door an' lukked down into th' dark.

" 'If ye've t'runk somebody down there,' he says, 'it's no joke.'

" 'If ye think it's a joke,' I says, 'go down. Ye'll find th' bear I bought f'r ye. I thought ye liked bears.'

" 'What did he cost?' he says, whin he has taken this in.

" 'A case iv pop,' I says, 'an' two bottles iv whisky. 'T is cheap f'r a bear,' I says.

" 'Well,' he says, afther thinkin' it over a bit, 'ye c'n pay f'r th' pop an' th' whisky,' he says, 'an' take th' bear.'

" There was a bit iv an argymint thin, but I won him over afther he'd laughed himsilk sick at th' way th' bear wint f'r th' bottles iv pop that we handed over th' railin' iv th' stairs.

"'P'r'aps we c'n do somethin' with him,' he says. 'I'll talk to Cassidy in th' mornin'.'

"It bein' closin' time, we locked up an' wint home—I was stoppin' with Tim—an' lift th' bear f'r Cassidy to find in th' mornin'. What else c'u'd we do? Ye can't put up a bear overnight in a five-room flat, an', annyhow, neither wan iv us wanted to be at th' other ind in that chain. Iv coarse Tim might have lift a note iv war-rnin', but he f'rgot it.

"An' Cassidy found th' bear. Oh, yis, he found th' bear. He wint down cellar f'r to tap a bar'l, an' he found th' bear, an' th' bear had got loose. We met Cassidy half a mile from th' place, an' he was still r-runnin'. He'd f'rgot his hat, an' he was in his shirt-sleeves, with th' bar-apron tanglin' up his legs.

"'What is it?' he says, whin we headed him off.

"'A bear,' says Tim, knowin' well what he meant.

"'A bear!' he yells. 'A bear, ye say! An' what's a bear doin' in a say-loon?' he asks. 'Will ye tell me that?' he says. 'Did I buy a half-inth'rיסט in a say-loon,' he says, 'or in a mannagery?'

"'Niver mind that,' says Tim. 'What did ye do with th' bear?'

"'What did I do with him!' yells Cassidy. 'I niver touched him. Afther I seen him,' he says, 'I come up-th' stairs in two jumps,' he says, 'an' th' bear done it in wan. I come out th' door,' he says, 'an' th' bear come through th' plate-glass windy. An' th' last I see iv him,' he says, 'he was rasslin' th' dago on th' corner f'r a bunch iv bananas.'

"'T is a shame to excite a bear that way,' says Tim, shakin' his head. 'Ye've prob'ly rooned him,' he says.

"'Excite!' says Cassidy, boolin' over. 'Excite, is it? Me incite him! T was him incited me! He begun it,' he says, 'an' I hope he is rooned.'

"'He's a valyble bear,' says Tim. 'He cost a case iv pop an' two bottles iv whisky,' he says, 'an' now he's lost.'

"'Th' saints be praised f'r that!' says Cassidy.

"'But he ain't lost. There's a po-lisman waitin' f'r us at th' say-loon.'

"'Ye have a bear,' says th' po-lisman.

"'Have I?' says Tim, cautious.

"'Ye have,' says th' po-lisman, 'an' ye betther come up to th' station an' take him away,' he says, 'before he does anny more har-rm. He's a boxin' bear,' he says, 'an' he's a'ready knocked out two iv Finnegan's teeth, an' is darin' th' rist iv th' squad to fight.'

"'Go afther ye-er bear, Barney,' says Tim to me.

"'He's no bear iv mine,' I says. 'I got him f'r you,' I says, 'an' paid f'r him out iv stock.'

"An' we're scrappin' over this whin th' dago what has th' fruit-stand at the corner drills in, an' Tim has to pay him tin dollars f'r th' damage th' bear done, not darin' to make a r-row while th' po-lisman is there.

"'T is no throuble to handle th' bear,' I says, whin th' dago's gone, 'if ye take a bottle iv pop along. He'll folly th' pop,' I says.

"An' 't is fin'ly settled that way. Tim takes all th' pop he c'n carry an' goes afther th' bear, an' a bit later he comes lopin' back, holdin' a bottle iv pop in wan hand an' th' chain in th' other an' havin' a har-nd time to keep th' bear from steppin' on him. They makes th' circuit iv th' place three times, knockin' over tables an' chairs an' customers, before Tim thinks to ind it be givin' up th' pop. Thin he anchors th' bear to a steam-pipe in th' back r-room, an' th' fun begins, iv'rybody wantin' to feed th' bear pop. Tim niver done such a thrade.

"'T is not so bad,' says Tim, whin we're closin' up that night, 'an' whin th' novelty wears off,' he says, 'I think I'll thrain th' bear to tind bar.'

"But th' bear has a'ready made a thry at that whin Cassidy opens up th' nex' mornin'. He's got loose ag'in, an' he's rooned th' makin's iv over two hundred jags. 'T is all in puddles on th' floor. Tim is fair distraacted whin Cassidy tells him iv it, an' puts it all on me. Thin in comes th' po-lisman an' says th' city wants fifty dollars.

"'F'r why?' says Tim.

"'F'r a license,' says th' po-lisman. 'Ye got to have a license,' he says, 'f'r to r-run a show like this. Th' vodyville managers is all kickin',' he says.

"'I'll do betther than that,' says Tim, cheerful. 'Th' city c'n have th' bear,' he says. 'Take him along!' he says.

"But th' po-lisman backs out, havin' no orders coverin' that an' no likin' f'r th' bear. Tim, in his throuble, turns on me, an' is openin' up sthrough, whin a felly that's been lukkin' at th' bear breaks in.

"'Say!' says th' felly, 'I got a dog,' he says, 'that c'n lick that bear in two minutes.'

"'In wan minute,' says Tim, 'ye w'u'd n't know ye iver had a dog.'

"'I'll back him f'r fifty dollars,' says th' felly.

"'Ye're on,' says Tim. 'That'll make me break near even on what he's cost me. Where'll we fight 'em?' he says.

"'Th' Grove,' says th' felly, that being a place that was let out f'r picnics an' prize-fights. 'Th' Grove,' he says, 'to-morry mornin'.'

"Iv coarse th' wor-nd wint out, an' there was hunderds iv spoorts an' others come to see th' fight. We tuk th' bear out there in a

wagon, Tim an' me did, lurin' him into it be a bottle iv pop, but we was no more than fair started whin th' bear tuk a notion to come up on th' seat with us. We climbed out on th' horse, where we got shook off, an' we was two hours an' twenty miles overtakin' th' rig. We was some tired an' cross whin we got him to th' Grove.

"There was no pit nor cage nor nawthin' iv that sort, so th' fellies tuk to th' threes fr to see th' fight. It lukked safer. They was hangin' from iv'ry limb. Ye niver see threes so overloaded with unnatural fruit.

"Tim had th' bear, keepin' him continted be feedin' him pop, an' th' dog was held be th' felly what owned him. They was to turn him loose at th' wor-rd an' take to th' threes thimselves. Oho! 't was planned fine, but they fr'got that th' bear was a climbin' bear as well as a boxin' bear. Th' dog give wan jump fr him, an' th' bear wint up a three that was holdin' all it c'u'd carry, an' th' min begun droppin' off like acorns. They come down in bunches, all tangled up, an' scattered like an ixplodin' bomb whin they struck. I saw min that ye w'u'd n't think c'u'd hop over a match take a tin-fut fence without hardly touchin' it. I wint through a hole in th' fence that I c'u'd n't have put wan fut through at anny other time."

"Is that all?" I asked, as Flynn paused.

"T was all I see," he answered. "I tuk th' first thrain home an' wrote fr me clo'es. But I hear-rd that th' dog was so excited that he chewed up th' stuffed bear in front iv a fur store on th' way back, an' it cost seventeen dollars to make it r-right with th' man."

"How about Tim's bear?" I persisted.

"Oh," said Flynn, "Tim found th' man that I got him from an' paid him tin dollars to take him away, an' now he's holdin' my clo'es till I pay half th' cost iv th' bear, but I c'n buy new clo'es fr less."



LOVE UNTOLD

BY KATHERINE FAY

MY love for you has been forever mute,
Like some deep passion-toned but silent lute
Which holds within it all life's melodies,
Waiting your touch to wake such music sweet
As can send lagging time with flying feet.
Quick! strike the chords that the whole earth may hear
My song of joy—and love shall cast out fear!

WHAT IS WRONG WITH OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By Joseph M. Rogers

Author of "Educating Our Boys," etc.

FIFTH PAPER—THE COST OF IMPROVEMENT

BUT the cost! That is the cry put up every time an effort is made to improve the schools. One might suppose that expense was an unsurpassable barrier to every public improvement; yet we find millions expended cheerfully for material things, while the cost of education is always harped on as if it were a waste. There is no doubt that the cost of education is constantly increasing in every direction, but it is certain to double before we get anything near ideal conditions.

We have seen that the total expenditure for public education of all kinds in this country is about \$350,000,000 annually, of which one-fifth goes for land and buildings, one-fifth for general and miscellaneous expenditures, and three-fifths for the salaries of teachers.

This salary roll of \$210,000,000 seems large in the aggregate, but, as was demonstrated in a preceding article, the average per teacher is very low. Women, who do most of the teaching, receive an average of not more than \$325 a year. It is probable that if we could get exact figures, the average would be much lower.

We spend, on an average, twenty-five dollars a year on each pupil enrolled in the public schools, or perhaps thirty dollars for the average of those who attend, since in many States "enrolment" means simply those of school age. In some of our Southern States the average expenditure for all purposes is no more than five dollars per pupil, and the teachers are paid by the State on the basis of pupils enrolled. However, it is satisfactory to know that in this section conditions are improving somewhat.

Massachusetts has always taken the lead in educational matters in this country, but for many reasons it would be hardly fair to take

her as a type. I select New York as a better average State for comparison, for, in spite of its great wealth and commerce, it has also an enormous population of poor and ignorant foreigners.

In the year 1908 that State expended \$73,000,000 on its public schools, an average of sixty dollars for each pupil enrolled and seventy-five dollars for the average of attendance. The enrolment included many thousands of children who attended private schools, so that the larger figure is the one to be considered. Now, there is no reason why every State in the Union should not have expended as much per capita. It would have caused few hardships, while the results would have been out of all proportion to the cost. If any Southern State had expended one-half this sum, it would have been of inestimable value. In New York the average salary paid was \$750 per year, but there are many more male teachers in that State than in the average State north of the Ohio. Also, salaries in New York are nearly double the general average.

Now, it will be as easy for New York to double its present expenditure as for any other State to come up to New York's present standard. It is only a few years ago that the average cost in the Empire State was thirty dollars per capita, and no one claims that she is overburdened. In fact, she is increasing her budget all the time.

Most people would shudder to think that the average child in the public schools should entail an annual expenditure of seventy-five dollars, but to that we are soon coming if we are to make progress. It ought to reach one hundred dollars during the present generation.



This increase will come slowly, and should be largely for salaries. Present buildings can for a time be adapted to the new methods, and new construction can be changed without a vast increase of cost. To double existing salaries—and to get a higher grade of instruction thereby—would cost \$210,000,000 or say twelve dollars per family, but as the immediate need is for more teachers it would eventually cost a great deal more than that. How is this sum to be secured?

In the less enlightened States almost the whole of the school fund is raised and dispensed by the State, a bad policy, since legislators are always anxious to escape laying taxation. In the older States of the North and West taxes for schools are raised in the minor political divisions, to which the State usually adds a large sum. In Pennsylvania the State gives \$7,500,000 a year from revenue not derived from real estate taxes. No other State does nearly so well, but many States give aid and encouragement in a more or less systematic way,

the object being to help those communities where it is hardest to raise local taxes.

To double present school expenditures at once would be impossible, but a ten per cent. annual increase for ten years is reasonable and feasible. But I hold that we shall never achieve the desired end in this country until the national government does its share in the matter. Twenty-five years ago a few far-seeing statesmen were eager to have the Federal government enter upon this work, but the effort failed, largely because it was held at the time that the matter was one solely for State control. In recent years there has come a recrudescence of nationalism, which may have gone too far in some directions, but certainly not far enough in others—notably in the matter of education.

If the national government may properly irrigate the arid lands of the West, dig out the channels of our rivers and harbors, examine our food supplies with microscopes, promote every detail of farming, and establish the rates for railway traffic, there is no reason why it may not help in the matter of education. It spends millions each year for the farmers, who are a minority of the people, while the children, who are in the majority, are not considered at all. Every other progressive nation on earth gives much attention to education, and we must give up the idea that because Europe does a thing we should for that reason avoid it. We are still wearing some of our swaddling clothes.



The factors of expense and administration seem very large to many people, even to those who are normally intelligent. They seem to think that it would greatly interfere with local affairs, and create a vast machine which might be used for political purposes, or strangled by its own red tape.

It ought to be evident that nothing of the sort would be attempted. In distributing the public money for educational purposes certain fundamental principles would necessarily be observed, one of which would be to require a certain high minimum of money from States and local districts. Without this stimulus the system would be a failure. And so far as administration is concerned, the national government would have largely advisory powers, but it would be enabled to employ the best pedagogical talent in the country to the end that the best methods be used and the highest standards set up. It could do nothing more, but that is just the thing which is now needed. We have differing systems in all our States, and in some of them hardly any system at all.

And the money!

It is not to be expected that the government would at once appropriate vast sums for the purpose, but it is worth while noting what it is spending money for. Our annual bill for pensions, almost exclusively on account of the Civil War, is \$160,000,000. Ten years from now that sum will be reduced to comparatively small figures, unless there is new legislation. If it were possible to apply that sum to local schools, it would provide much more than half the sum needed either to double the present number of teachers or to double the salaries of the existing number. We pay out for Federal pensions more than half as much as we spend on the public schools. It is not at all chimerical to suggest that all that is saved from the present maximum of the pension bill should be devoted to education.



This is a rich nation. The present generation knows little about taxation. Indeed, only during our Civil War were taxes ever high in this country, compared with those of other nations. A few years ago we remitted \$70,000,000 per annum in stamp taxes laid during the Spanish war. It is doubtful if any person was relieved thereby, and now the nation would be very glad if it had the money. We could raise a similar sum without much difficulty. In fact, our trouble with taxes has not been so much the amount raised as the manner of laying them, which has involved a vast economic principle which has been injected into politics. Japan levies a tax of eight dollars per capita, or forty per cent. of the average income. Yet it manages to get along and seemingly prospers.

Our present difficulty in raising more taxes for school purposes arises out of the fact that they are now almost exclusively levied on real estate. Real estate certainly bears more than its proper proportion, because it is the most palpable property, that which can least easily escape. It is certain that one of the reforms of the future is a better adjustment of the burdens of taxation, but instead of waiting for that adjustment, it seems to me that the demand for more money for the schools will be a lever in bringing it about. The property in this country is estimated to be worth \$120,000,000,000, a sum which is inconceivable, but we know that a large portion of it does not bear its proper share of the public burdens. The public schools cost less than one-third of one per cent. of that sum. If one per cent. of the total amount should be spent for schools—and that seems a modest demand—there would be enough money for all requirements—more than could be used advantageously at once. And it would be an investment of the most profitable kind.

This, however, is a mere digression, and some more available factors will be considered in the following paper.

GRAN'MA

By Luellen Teters Bussenius

“**N**O, it’s too far for you to go, Gran’ma. Those parades are so long in passing, and Joel ain’t got enough money to spend to-day to get us all something to eat. The children ain’t never seen a parade before—you know Sammy was finishing the whooping-cough last Decoration Day, an’ Lily, his other twin, had no shoes. ‘T ain’t as if you had never seen anything grand before, Gran’ma. You said you went to Boston twice when you was a girl.” Luetta, old Mrs. Eaton’s daughter-in-law, spoke authoritatively. She moved impatiently around the cramped bedroom, thrusting things vexatiously aside, her black eyebrows drawn together in an ominous line. “Sammy! Sammy, have you seen my belt? I never can get ready, what with all this confusion. It’s jest this way every time I set out to have any pleasure. Everybody puts me back so.”

“There, there, Luetta; don’t take on so,” Grandmother Eaton soothed her mildly. “It’s on the counterpane under Lily’s sash, where you put it.” She picked it up, pinning it in place around the shapeless dimensions which indicated the young woman’s waist-line. “I see by the paper that Joslin’s dry-goods emporium is having a big sale this week,” she continued, her accents weak, falling indefinitely over final syllables, as if she lacked sufficient courage to sustain them. An unfixed, wavering smile trembled around the patient, drooping corners of her mouth; she emitted a delicate, insinuating dependency, despite the amplitude of her body, which bespoke physical endurance. “All them silk foulards is marked down—givin’ them away, the paper said. If I’d ‘a’ sold the meadow lot, I’d—I’d ‘a’ gone to town and bought one,” she announced in gentle defiance.

“But, Gran’ma,” her daughter-in-law remonstrated argumentatively, “your rheumatiz would n’t let you. Besides, you’ve got a closetful of clothes—an’ you never wear them.” Her face was uncomfortably red as she tugged away at a refractory pin, and a dew of perspiration shone on her forehead. “You don’t need any new dress.”

“I—I know that, Luetta; but them things ain’t clothes to me. I jest like to hang them up before me, feastin’ my eyes on their handsomeness. It takes years offen my shoulders. It’s like pictures with rich folks. That plum-colored dress of mine has saved me many a

doctor bill. Last winter, when my back ached so, I usen to take it out an' set it up before Pa's crayon, where he could see it—he always liked to see me dressed up in it—for it was the first thing he bought after he paid off the mortgage—that an' a plow. Them white leghorns of oun bought them for him, with their eggs. Well, I jest imagined how I was steppin' like a duehess into my carriage, with feetmen liftin' up the trail; an' it made me stand up as straight as old Doctor Bradford's blood pills does, with the pain all gone. When you've got on a good dress, you've got to act good, you know. Every time I put on my black silk dress I notice how elevatin' my thoughts grow—I can almost tell every name of them Presidents straight. Pa taught me my eddication. He had a grand set of brains; he never got mixed up where the oceans was, as some scholars does, or where the poles had ought to be." Her dim old eyes sparkled girlishly, in reminiscence.

Luetta made no reply; she scowled out of the window toward the barn, where a slightly attenuated man with dun-colored whiskers and eyes to match was hitching a white horse to a new spring-wagon. "Joel is so slow," she complained petulantly. "The parade'll be half over before we get started." She sighed dismally, seating herself on the edge of a chair, so as not to molest the stiffly starched petticoats that whistled every time she moved. The two children ran out to the yard to join their father. Old Mrs. Eaton moved deprecatingly toward the luminous altitude of the feather-bed.

"Don't set down there, Gran'ma," Luetta cried. "I ain't got any more strength this morning to make a bed. Set in the kitchen there, an' I can hear what you say. You can set on this chair after I go—for I don't want you fussin' around as you did the day we left you here while we went to the Christmas Tree at the church. Here you upset the house, sweepin' and raisin' dust, and nearly wore out the broom. There's some cold corn-cakes left from breakfast, and a cup of skimmed milk. Don't touch the cream; and, mind, don't open any preserves. I want them for company, and, anyways, they'd hurt your rheumatiz. I want you to give that old white dress of yours to Lily—you might rip it up while we're gone—the one you wore to Mandy Jameson's weddin' ten years ago. You're too old for white now, gran'ma."

"That—white dress?" Gran'ma quaked back. "Why, Luetta, I won't give that dress away. It's jest like an' oil-paintin' to me—sech purty ruffles! I never had a weddin'-dress, Luetta, till fifteen years after Pa and me was married. What with children coming, poor crops, and debts, there wa'n't any money left for those things. Then, when he did get a chance to buy it, I—I never got to wear it—he was took so sudden with that fever. But I wore it to Mandy's weddin', an' John, her man, said I'd ought to have been the bride myself. He was sech a flirt, an' I old enough to be his mother—an' nearly was!"

Abner Brown, his father, courted me two years when I was a girl; then he married Jenny Aiken. She was such a polite girl; she died of diabetes. I guess you'll see Abner with his one arm in the parade to-day, Luetta—with the old soldiers. We'd ought to have put some flowers on Pa's grave; I know he wa'n't a soldier, but he was a brave man, any way. Why, I've watched him milkin' a new cow, an' he never run when she tried to hook him. If I'd 'a' sold the meadow-lot, I—"

"Gran'ma, you ain't sold it, so there! An' I guess it's only a waste of money puttin' flowers on a grave, when people don't know it—when there's meat an' potatoes to buy." Luetta rustled discordantly in her stiff skirts, raising the window; she seemed always at war with an invisible enemy, her voice being strident and harsh from uncontrolled ire.

"Joel! Joel!" she sang out threateningly. "Ain't you ever coming? We might jest as well stay at home if—"

"Comin'!" her husband's genial tones floated back in response; there was a decisive snap of the whip, and the wagon drew up before the kitchen door, the twins impartially divided into each seat.

Luetta paused on the threshold, in a parting admonishment to her mother-in-law, who had folded her arms across her bosom and regarded the other members of her family with a wistful look in her pretty blue eyes:

"Mind you don't get the house out of order, Gran'ma."

"No, Luetta, I won't," the old lady answered meekly, swallowing a stubborn hard lump that rose in her throat. It was her house, but it might just as well have belonged to the veriest stranger, for all the authority she had in its management. She felt intuitively that her daughter-in-law, from a sense of kindness, wished to spare her the responsibility of it. But to be relegated to a complete state of dependency made her pride smart. She forced a smile to her lips as they drove off, and waved her hand merrily until the yellow wheels of the vehicle disappeared over the hill.

They were gone. She gave a chuckle of glee, and stepped quickly into the kitchen, shaking the fire noisily, and pouring an extravagant quantity of coal on the embers. Then she dragged the copper wash-boiler down from a high shelf, and poured into it pails of water which she carried in from the well at the front of the house.

"I wish Luetta could see me now," she laughed aloud triumphantly. "Sayin' my rheumatiz would hurt! Lord! it's like livin' again, with them gone."

But what could she wash? Luetta was an immaculate housekeeper. Shelves of snowy linen testified to her industry; look where one would, an aggressive cleanliness stared uncompromisingly back.

"I must wash something"—Grandmother Eaton overcame her disappointment in a futile hope. "My arms is jest achin' for it—an' them suds go to the head like wine—they smell that sweet——"

Although she was alone, she tiptoed softly to the tiny room in the attic to which she had been despatched with sundry other old articles. She hesitated before the faded splendor of her wardrobe. The majestic folds of her plum-colored dress riveted her gaze in admiration. Behind fluttered the white, filmy ruffles of the girlish dress which she had worn to Mandy's wedding. It's limp beauty aroused her inspection. She took it off its hook with reverence, shaking some rice out on the floor, in reminder of its last appearance. Gran'ma scanned its hem closely for an excusable soiled spot. There was a barely perceptible discoloration on one of the flounces: that sufficed. She took it in determination under one arm and stepped briskly down the creaking stairs to the kitchen.

Her pale, withered cheeks blossomed red again as she bent ecstatically over the steaming tub; occasionally, from sheer jubilance, she burst into song, her cracked voice breaking with the tremolo of age over her cadences. The village band would play them all, she had no doubt, in the parade to-day:

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching.
Cheer, up, comrades, they will come!"

The big gray house-cat purred affectionately around her feet. Gran'ma stifled any compunctions she might have entertained as to Luetta's not permitting it, in the cat's enjoyment of the big saucerful of rich cream which she gave him. He should relish his holiday, too.

"And beneath the starry flag we shall breathe the air again,
Of the free land in our own beloved home."

The beat of her hands on the wash-board made a rhythmic accompaniment for the old familiar words. Tears of helplessness gushed from her eyes. She had wanted so badly to see the boys in their new blue uniforms, and to hear the music. But her tasks must be finished; and soon out on the clothes-line, spread apart reverentially by Joel's silver-headed cane, swung the airy folds of the white dress, while she hastily removed all incriminating evidence of laundering within the house. After the irons were hot, she paused reflectively for inspiration. Hunger was manifesting itself, from her unaccustomed activity. There was no contentment in cold corn-cakes and skimmed milk, however wholesome they were for her digestive organs.

"While we rally 'round the flag, boys, rally once again——"

she hummed under her breath as she whisked up some delicious-looking biscuit and shoved the panful into the oven.

"Shouting the battle cry of freedom!"

Luetta's best strawberry preserves appeared to be the only thing that would go well with them as she made a swift mental review of what she wanted. There was also a freshly smoked ham, fortunately already cut into, and out in the barnyard the hens were shrilly cackling their accomplishments of the day.

She ironed the dress while the biscuit baked, and hung it over the top of a door while she tacked fluttering white satin bows up the back, and wherever her whimsical fancy dictated.

"For all the world jest like butterflies dancin' away," she told herself joyously. "I guess I *am* too old to ever wear it again—it belongs to a bride. Perhaps, when I die—I wish—" Her tired eyes swept the distant horizon with an unspoken request. "Anyways, Luetta can't have it." She jerked her head in mild animosity. "My! I'd nearly forgot them biscuit!"

"Shouting the battle cry of—"

She paused as she opened the oven door and took out the pan of savory smelling bread.

"Free—dom!"

A terrific grinding, whirring noise sent her jumping back in fright, some of the biscuit scattering over the floor. Some one pounded loudly on the door.

"Come in," she cried, gasping, and thankful that it was not her family returning.

The door opened, and she saw a slim, dust-stained young woman, with frightened eyes, and a tall, dust-stained young man, who appeared to be uneasily watching the road behind him. A large touring-car stood back of them, in the very yard. They almost stumbled in, so hasty was their entrance. Grandmother Eaton waited for them to explain their presence, while she bent to gather up the scattered balls of bread. But the young fellow, who had kindly blue eyes that she liked, had already anticipated her action, and had restored them to the table.

"We're in an awkward position," he said in embarrassment—"this young lady and I. We've known each other for years, and always expected to marry; and here to-day her father says he has picked out another man—and we won't stand for it. We're eloping; that is,

we started to an hour ago, but we need a witness, some one here who knows the parson. We've stopped already at half a dozen places, but nobody seems to be at home."

"They've all gone to the parade," said Gran'ma. "I guess there wa'n't no one left behind but me." There was still the trace of tears around her eyes.

"What a shame!" said the young lady, who until now had stood like a scared wood-bird by the door. She went sympathetically to the old woman's side, and patted her tenderly on the shoulder. Grandmother Eaton had not had such a caress for years, and it brought more moisture to her eyes. "And you're such a dainty old lady—just like a piece of Dresden china," continued the girl.

Gran'ma did not know what Dresden china was, but she felt the implied compliment. She looked proudly at the door, where flaunted the frills of her white dress.

"I guess I can work as hard as any young woman," she boasted childishly. "I washed and ironed that myself this morning. I ain't wore it only once—ten years ago, to Mandy's weddin'—an' her man said I'd ought to be the bride then myself."

"I am sure you should have been!" warmly exclaimed the masculine member of her audience, and Gran'ma then and there became his sworn ally. She felt curiously rejuvenated in this affable environment, and bustled around in suddenly aroused hospitality.

"Set down and eat first," she urged cordially. "Brains don't act good on an empty stummick, an' you must plan what to do. Parson Snowden is busy makin' prayers to the cemetery to-day, before they decorate. I'd ought to have put some flowers on Pa's grave. He was a brave man, too, although he wa'n't no soldier; but he could break in any horse or cow you ever see. But Luetta said we could n't afford it. She's my daughter-in-law."

Her guests exchanged glances of understanding. The young lady moved toward her, in silent pity.

"Let me help you, please," she begged. "Just show me where the dishes are, and I will set the table. We are indeed very hungry, and everything smells so good. But I want to wait on you. I have never known any grandmother, but if I had one—" She broke down chokingly, turning her back.

"You see, it's this way"—the young man put a protecting arm around her while he talked. "Miss Ralston lives with her father and a stepmother. There's a houseful of servants—she never does anything she wants to—she's a figurative prisoner, no liberty, no independence."

Gran'ma was visibly impressed; it struck a vibrant chord within her. She took the girl in her motherly arms. "I'm goin' to dress

you like a bride in that white dress," she said compassionately, stroking the golden brown hair. "I'd rather see you wear it than any one else. We'll hurry an' eat, then we'll hunt up Parson Snowden. He may have quit prayin' by this time, for his larynx is wore out, an' he wheezes at times like an organ. But he is a powerful pray-er. An' we'll have some wine, too——"

Gordon never forgot the picture they made as they came out equipped for the wedding journey, Ellen Ralston's spirituelle beauty framed in the old-fashioned ruffled dress, a vision of youth and love; and, shadowy by her side, a prophecy of the long years beyond, the dim, frail face of age, with its silvered hair and slow, tired step. Grandmother Eaton was attired in her plum-colored gown, and she walked accordingly, lifting high her black-gaitered feet, and standing stiff and erect. She had never ridden in an automobile before, but as any aspect of fear would ruin her grandeur, she gulped down her qualms, and repeated the Lord's Prayer twice under her breath as they whizzed off.

"O—oh!" she gasped, after they had sped by a mile of farm-houses and were approaching the village. "I forgot to lock the back door; and Luetta——"

The retraced their way, and secured the door.

"I guess Luetta would be surprised if she saw us," Gran'ma laughed, tossing her head. "Joel's only got a spring wagon." The girl beside her patted her wrinkled hand in mute comprehension.

They had finally passed through the straggling road of the town, and were skirting the edge of the cemetery, in which a black crowd of people desultorily drifted. In their midst, a man with reddish hair and thin cheeks, his scanty coat-tails flapping around his thin limbs, raised his voice in exhortation. It was obvious that the parson was busied in his duties. The chug of the machine interrupted his fervor. He threw a swift glance toward the roadside, and saw an anxious-faced young man violently beckoning to him. He picked his way out between the mounds of grass, and listened stoically as the errand was stated. Grandmother Eaton leaned forward as the minister hesitated.

"I'm their witness, Parson," she said. "These young folks is friends of mine."

"You there, Gran'ma?" the Reverend greeted her effusively. "We'll step in the church, then, and get it over."

Grandmother Eaton had not been to church for many years. Luetta was afraid she would take cold there, and, besides, the wagon could never carry so many. The children must not grow up without religion. Gran'ma's soul had already been saved. To-day, in her old pew, she felt as if among old friends again. The active feet of her

grandchildren had worn bare places in the carpet, and the hymn-book was scribbled with childish pictures; but here had she fought her Gethsemanes as a girl, and faced the cruel loneliness of widowhood—years after.

Her dim eyes dwelt tenderly on the eager young countenances of the couple whom the parson was pronouncing man and wife. It was so, fifty years ago, that she had stood here with the one of her choice. Fifty years—what did they not contain? Sunshine; despair; grim actuality; but, to redeem the severity, there was ever love. And the phantoms of the past stalked unsummoned by, making a great hunger in her soul for affection.

Among the profusely decorated graves outside, Josiah's looked bare and forgotten. If she had only had some flowers— Her sad gaze met the happy eyes of the bride as the couple came down the aisle and drew her down the time-worn stone steps into the sunshine again. She hesitated at the gate that opened into the grounds. Divining her wish, Gordon walked quickly across the street and returned with arms heaped with pots of flowers, following in her wake. Regardless of the damp or her plum-colored grandeur, Grandmother Eaton fell prostrate over her husband's grave, convulsed with a hysterical fit of weeping. She finally arose, her confused gaze falling on the transformation which roses and lilies had wrought, so that all of the suggestive outlines of the mound were obliterated under that smiling shroud of fragrant bloom. Two feverish scarlet spots burned on her cheeks; the very happiness of her newly found friends isolated her the more from them; they tucked her carefully in the big red car, and whirled back over the darkening roads, in the chill spring air.

It all resolved itself into the nothingness of dreams as she crept into the silent, cold house, and donned her plain gingham dress again. Some way, indefinably, she felt her shoulders bending anew under that harness of years, and her feet dragged more slowly in her old slippers. It was only the tangibility of a crisp bill, of a wonderful denomination, which her fleeing guests had pressed into her reluctant hand as they departed, that confirmed their flesh and blood existence at all. It might well be the embodiment of another dream—she had had so many of them of late; but, nevertheless, she deposited the money in her rusty black tin box, with her yellowed wedding-certificate and other time-honored treasures.

She felt lonely and depressed in the house as twilight came and the family had not returned. Luetta had forbidden her ever to attempt to light the lamps, so she crouched out on the front porch in the crisp, thin air, tired from the unwonted actions of the day, and afraid of the dark within.

"Shouting the battle cry of freedom!"

Her eyes had closed in sheer fatigue, but she heard again the lilt of the horns in the band as they played the old war music, and kept time with their boyish feet. And behind, an echo of that sinister fray, limped the Grand Army—what few there were—swinging the grand old flag, all tattered and stained—with whose blood, God knows—

How her throat ached! Acute pains shot through her cramped limbs.

“Roses and lilies,” she murmured incoherently, as thoughts pulsed fragmentarily through her tired brain. And it seemed to her a wonderful path of flowers opened into the sky. Around Josiah’s grave—roses and lilies—oh, the sweetness, cloying, intolerable, of the flowers—

“I nearly forgot Gran’ma,” Luetta remarked as they drove into the yard later. The stars were beginning to twinkle overhead, and there was a definite sharpness from the damp ground that made a wrap comfortable. “I guess she’s asleep by this time.”

“It’s too bad she could n’t have gone with us,” her husband spoke remorsefully. “There was plenty of room for one more. To-morrow I’ll hitch up the other horse an’ take her buggy-ridin’. It’ll do her good. Whoa, there!” He drew the horse in at the step.

Luetta clambered out first, unassisted, and deposited the children with maternal emphasis on the ground.

“My! what’s this on the porch?” she cried, jumping back in fright. “Joel! Joel!”

The increasing fear in her tone struck him unpleasantly. He jumped swiftly from the seat, with a dread, a foreboding, that nearly suffocated him.

“Mother”—his strong arms caught the recumbent form sharply to his breast with a feeling of whose existence he had hitherto been in ignorance. He shook her with rough tenderness. Luetta began to cry, and the twins hid themselves in terror in the folds of her skirt.

“Mother!” Joel cried in agony.

Did he hear anything? Or was it fancy that she was muttering unintelligibly to herself? He bent his ear to listen.

“Roses an’ lilies—how purty she looked in them white ruffles! A purty bride—” Her voice trailed off into a sibilant whisper.

“Poor soul, her mind is wanderin’,” sobbed Luetta. “Oh, Joel, I guess it’s all my fault. I ain’t done right.” She buried her head against his rough coat-sleeve.

“There, there, Luetta girl; don’t take on so,” he assuaged her grief. “I guess we’ve both been to blame. There, there!”

Luetta dried her eyes quickly.

"We must get her in the house first, Joel. Put her on my bed—it should be hers, any way. I never meant anythin' wrong, Joel. It will jest kill me if—" She broke down weakly. "Run, Sammy, get the wine—"

Grandmother Eaton opened her eyes full upon them; she was still very sleepy from the fatigue of the day. She sat upright, in surprise, at the faces around her.

Luetta fell weeping on her neck. "You give us sech a turn, Gran'ma," she sobbed; and then Joel walked over to the window and cleared his throat noisily.

SPRING

BY ROSCOE GILMORE STOTT

GOD gives me Spring,
Spring in my window here.
Out on the lawn the children romp and sing;
Under their feet the fresh, green grasses grow—
How fragile was earth's coverlet of snow!
Great companies of flowers dot the green;
The sun glows warmly with a brilliant sheen.
Where is the Winter drear?

God gives me Spring,
Spring in the field and wood—
Dear Nature-memories to which we cling
With loving reverence. I hear the song
Of eager mating-bird. I feel how strong
Is all this throbbing of awaking life.
With strange, new hope the hills and plains are rife.
I love their joyous mood.

God gives me Spring,
Spring in my dormant heart;
Her welcome carols through my being ring;
I am in harmony with Him Whose word
The drowsy pulse of Nature now has stirred.
My narrowed soul by magic charm expands,
And wakes to sympathy that understands.
I am of Spring a part!

THE BALLOON "TERRA-CONTRA"

By Helen Talbot Porter

FROM the first day I met him, Professor Peter Newman captivated me. His tremendous enthusiasm found instant echo in my heart, and, however my faith in his theories may have wavered, my faith in the Professor himself remained steadfast.

"How-de-do, Mr. Alexander?" he said. "How long is it since you flew a toy balloon?"

Now, I was in my sophomore year at the University, and this curious question about a very youthful sport brought mortification to my breast and a flush to my cheeks.

"A—a l-l-on-g t-time ago, Professor Newman," I managed to stammer.

"It went up all right, did it not? Did you ever break the string? What happened then?" The questions came swift as bullets from a repeater.

I looked at him suspiciously. Was this wonderful old man making fun of me! But from under his shaggy white eyebrows his keen eyes looked into mine, honest and serious. Under their magnetism my irritation passed away, and I answered, "I lost them all that way, Professor—all but one that just 'busted'!"

We both laughed, for the acknowledgment showed that my balloon-flying had not really been so many years gone by.

He stroked his long white beard for a moment in silence. "But if they had been real balloons, they could have come down again. Do you believe real balloons can come down?"

"Why, yes, Professor," I answered politely; "I am sure they can come down."

"Do you believe the world goes round?" he asked irrelevantly.

Again the telltale blush spread over my features. Was the old Professor crazy, or did he think I was?

"Most certainly I believe the world goes round, Professor. Science has proved that beyond question or doubt."

"Good! Good!" he muttered. Then, "You will do," he announced

with sudden conviction. "Judd said you would do, but of course I had to see you and ask you a few vital questions before I took you into partnership."

Vital questions! As if he could read my inward exclamation, he continued hastily: "I want a young fellow with common sense, nerve, and discretion to help me in my experiments, and Judd told me you would do. Judd would do it himself, but he is married. You are not married?" he asked in consternation. "Oh, no"—without waiting for me to answer; "Judd told me you were not married. Do not marry!" And now his tone was pleading, as if my life were in danger, and he alone could save it.

"Young man, will you come to my sanctum and help me fly—" he hesitated, then with the sweetest smile I ever saw on a man's face—"fly a toy balloon?"

That first meeting still stands as distinct as my memory of my first school declamation. The tall, wiry figure, full of strange reserve power, the nervous movement of his lithe, strong hands, the peculiar flash of his keen gray eyes, were all indelible impressions.

That very evening I went to his workshop, full of a curiosity equalled only by my pride in the fact that this wonderful old Professor was about to trust me to help him in his secret experiments.

The Professor wore a long velveteen coat, tied at the waist with a brilliant red scarf. He asked me if I had any matches in my pocket, and took them from me, putting them carefully into a tin box. "You and I do not want to make our ascent through the roof before we are ready!" he chuckled. Then he led me up a narrow stairway into a huge room at the top of the house, brightly lighted with electricity.

In that first moment I thought it was a chemical laboratory. Another look, and it appeared to be a machine-shop. There were engines and motors, astronomical instruments and tools of all kinds, and a remarkable set of blue prints, showing lines and curves that reminded one of a typhoid fever chart. A monstrous map of the world was nailed against one wall, and the lines of latitude were emphasized with blue paint.

Pointing to a stool for me, he balanced himself on the corner of a work-bench, and, waving his arm, began without preface:

"Son"—and he called me "Son" ever after—"you and I are to prove to the world that the so-called dirigible balloon is a waste of time, money, and the lives of men. It is wrong—all wrong from the start. Dirigible, dirigible! By good fortune, it may fly round a flag-staff on some high building and reach the ground without mishap. But dirigible! Every instant of the trip is fraught with danger, while *my* plan, *our* plan now," he added with his wonderful smile, "is

quite different. It is so simple that scientists and inventors have passed it by.

"Listen attentively, Son! A balloon goes up and down"—he paused—"and the world goes round. That is all of it!"

He leaned forward to study my face, breathless for fear I might not catch his meaning.

With swift inspiration I understood.

"But, Professor," I interposed shyly, "how could you stay there while it went round?"

The Professor sprang to his feet impatiently, but sat down again on the bench before he spoke.

"Have you never heard of 'hitching your wagon to a star'? We'll hitch ours to the sun, to the sun at noonday."

His manner changed. "Son, I will explain it to you as if you were the public, the ignorant unbelievers who have kept scientists and discoverers bound to earth, even as Prometheus was bound to the rock." He left the work-bench and came over to me. Standing there, with head lifted high, he made his statements exactly as he would have done had there been a thousand hearers. I have always wished that a great company could have heard him as I heard him that night.

"One thing is fixed"—his voice resounded in the silent room: "balloons can be made—are made—that will rise to the clouds and above and come down to earth again.

"Second, another thing is fixed: the earth rotates on its axis once in twenty-four hours. At noon of every day you see the sun right overhead. You saw it yesterday if it did not rain, you saw it to-day, and you expect to see it to-morrow.

"Third—and now do not be astonished; remember that wonderful things have been accomplished by science, that things proclaimed impossible have been done. Third, I repeat, let a balloon be built to ascend from earth—say, from New York City at noon—halt in high air and allow the Earth *to turn around under it*, and in twelve hours that balloon could come down in China, in eighteen hours it could easily land in Constantinople, in twenty-four it could descend in New York again. Think of the capabilities of such aerial navigation!

"Ah, but I see you are startled by my words 'halt in high air.' Let some one versed in the scientific depths of the attractions of gravitation arrange a system of, in part, transferring from that balloon its attraction for the earth by powerful magnetic action, and subject it to the attraction of the sun overhead at noonday—and the thing is done.

"Released from mundane influence, the balloon *stands still*. Its occupants in the thin high ether see the Earth, with its changing proportions of land and sea rolling beautifully and majestically be-

neath them. As it rapidly brings the desired haven in sight, a re-transfer is effected, and the balloon sinks to its wished-for destination. Our balloon rises in London at noon, with the same sun shining above it; three hours later, it descends in New York City.

"But, you say, how could anything manufactured by man attain such terrible speed? Ah, that is your mistake. The earth already rotates at this speed; the balloon remains at rest.

"It is known that the earth revolves from west to east, and by the marvellous science of astronomy we are given such specific measurements of its velocity that with an average high-school education one can make exact latitudinal calculations. If we make our ascent at forty-five degrees latitude, we can be sure we descend at forty-five degrees latitude. If we start at sixty degrees, we descend at sixty degrees, and by calculating time and longitude we cannot miss our destination.

"Have you studied the wave theory? The waves of light, the waves of sound, the wave-currents of electricity? Place yourself in a room built of certain materials, and you can hear nothing from outside; the waves of sound recoil as waves that beat upon a rock-bound coast.

"Place a sheet of tin in front of your windows, and the waves of light are stopped. The room is as dark as the blackest night. Place a pane of glass between positive and negative wires and the current of electricity is cut off." His voice thrilled with excitement. "That is the way I will conquer the law of gravitation. I have discovered it, this strange material, that will insulate us from its power and enable us to float in the heavens while the world rolls on beneath us."

He took my arm and led me to a closet which was double-locked. In a large glass jar on the shelf was a strange mass of something, firmer than pitch, but not as hard as metal, of a dark green color, with little glistening specks through it, as if it had been peppered with gold dust. It had a disagreeable odor, curiously like mud taken from a brackish creek.

"Watch," he said, and he placed a feather in the open jar.

It floated.

"Look again," and he laid a collar button on the strange stuff.

Before my astonished eyes it floated as the feather had done.

"Look once more!" and the fingers that clutched my arm tightened in his exultation. Taking a four-inch cube of steel, he pressed it down to the green material, but as his hand left it the steel slowly floated about the jar, hitting the feather and the collar button, with no more force than if they had all been of the same weight.

"Son, it is not a vacuum, for the jar is not covered, as you see. At last I have overcome the law of gravitation!"

From that evening I was the constant companion of the old

Professor. We made little balloons and let them fly, experimented with electricity, and compounded the green stuff week by week. It was impossible to arrange a chemical formula, and the Professor would add a little of this and a little of that, much as the darky cook of our childhood seasoned the terrapin stew. We both realized the danger of having no fixed formula, but the Professor cheerfully declared that this had its good side, for it made the theft of our secret impossible.

The great balloon in which we planned to take our marvellous trip was in process of construction, but it took us months to adjust its complicated machinery. The electric battery by which we could attain that strange magnetic influence of the noonday sun was again and again returned to the makers for changes so important, and yet so slight, that only the cleverest engineers could grasp the meaning of the Professor's suggestions.

The green stuff—"terra-contra," the Professor informally called it—was to be carried in a great panel-shaped case, which would lie flat under the balloon when we halted in high air, but could be folded like a table-leaf in the descent. This case we also made with great difficulty, but when my courage failed me, the Professor's faith and enthusiasm made me ashamed.

Untrained in scientific research as I was, I often asked questions that annoyed him. Then with his characteristic wave of the hand he would dismiss my doubts with the words: "But all that is so trivial, Son. What we care for is the fundamental fact that the world goes round and that balloons go up and down. Wait," he would cry, "till you stand in the solemn grandeur of a limitless sky and see the great throbbing world rolling beneath you. What will you care then for these questions of jots and tittles?"

At length came the day when it was completed. I might have said the night, but the dawn was slowly filtering through the dark when we stopped—stopped because there was nothing more to do.

A monstrous hole in the roof had been prepared, for the balloon was to start from the work-shop, and the first intimation that the world would have that we were ready would be when our balloon suddenly appeared in the air, to grow smaller and smaller before astonished eyes.

Professor Newman was deathly pale, and his eyes shone under his white eyebrows like burning coals of psychic fire. His hands trembled as he put them on my shoulders and looked into my face. "Son," he cried triumphantly, "Son, it is finished! But go and rest to-day. The start must not be made by two exhausted men. Rest, Son, and dream only of toy balloons."

It seemed almost as if he had hypnotized me, for it was with

difficulty that I fought off my drowsiness till I reached my room in the south dormitory, when I threw myself down on the bed and instantly fell asleep.

For a long, long time I must have slept like one dead, then shadowy pictures passed before my eyes, pictures of toy balloons. When I woke it was night again, and, stiff and chilly, I staggered to my feet and went to the nearest *café* for coffee and a steak; but I ate hurriedly, for I longed to be with the old Professor.

As I neared the house I was surprised to find there was no gleam of light from the windows, and a vague sense of anxiety chilled my heart as I put my latch-key in the door and dashed upstairs.

"Professor!" I called. "Professor!" But there was no answer. In alarm I flung open the door of the work-shop and switched on the lights.

The shock of that moment takes my breath away now.

There was no balloon, no case of terra-contra, no Professor!

Involuntarily I screamed, so loud it seemed as if the stars themselves could hear me. Horrified by the peril of his lonely trip, disappointed in the hope of a marvellous experience, heart-broken to think he had not trusted me, I sank down on the little stool and covered my face with my hands, groaning aloud.

At last I was able to look about me with seeing eyes. On the bench, where the dear old Professor had always sat, lay a note directed to me, held at one corner by the four-inch cube of steel.

Snatching it up, I tore open the envelope, and as I read a lump came into my throat that nearly made me cry out with pain, while more than once I stopped and drew my hand over misty eyes.

Son, [it read,] oh, my Son, forgive me! It is because of my love for you that I am hurting you so. As the days went by, my faith even in my invention weakened, beside that great love that a teacher has for his faithful pupil, that a father has for his only son. I could not let you run the risk of a mistake, a failure. You are young and strong, and life is before you—I am old. If my years of investigation prove fruitless, then it is better that I go. I, the captain, will go down with my ship, if need be. But you, Son, must live on, and I know I could not have borne the bitterness of defeat if I had thus been the means of shortening by one hour the life of one who is dearer to me now than success or fame.

I have left you my work-shop, my books and papers, and whatever money is left after the years of constant inroads into my principal.

But this is the dark side, Son. I have told you this because there must be "ifs" in these human lives of ours, but, Son, I believe I will come back. To-day is Tuesday, the sixth. Expect me on Thursday, at noon. I cannot resist stopping in China for a few hours, but then I will come back, and together we will make all the other trips.

Son, my heart cries out for you, as a boy cries out for his first love, but it is only the one trip you are missing, for I will come then and take you with me always.

Oh, my son, do not be angry! God bless you, God be with us both.

PETER NEWMAN

Day after day I watched in vain, then came that newspaper paragraph, so incomplete, so tantalizing to one who had found in it the birth of hope—a message to the Associated Press from Peking.

It told—oh, so meagrely!—how a balloon had dropped suddenly into the heart of China on Wednesday, January 7—into a part of the country where a foreign tongue was scarcely spoken, where few foreigners had ever been seen before. His nationality it was impossible to determine, but the sole occupant of the balloon was an aged man, with long white beard and eyes like the eyes of the gods in the temples. And he laughed and clapped his hands together and leaped about strangely. But on the following day, when they had brought a great throng to see him, he had escaped them and gone. Some had seen the balloon rising as if straight to the sun itself, too late to detain him. Then followed the suggestion that it might have been a Japanese spy. But I knew better!

Again I took my stand, hopeful, expectant, every day at noon, till, after weeks of weary waiting, I gave him up for dead.

But now out of the profound silence of a year comes another message.

Only a torn scrap of his handwriting in an envelope with my address, but without a postmark. It was found in a foreign mail pouch, and was as impossible to trace as if the old Professor had dropped it into the mail steamer from the heights of his balloon:

Son, I am alive at
My balloon like your
"busted." I will come as
No post office and no
is sublime
marvel
home.

That is all.

I tell the story, that the facts may be translated into every tongue, so that my Professor may receive the help he needs. I fear that in foreign lands he may again be mistaken for a spy, as in China, or as an irresponsible person who must be shut up.

Once more my heart beats high with hope, and my blood tingles when I think that soon I may see my beloved Professor and hear his thrilling, exultant voice calling, "Son, balloons do go up and down, and the world goes round!"

TO SIR ERNEST H. SHACKLETON

"I shall take the adventure that God will ordain me."
—MORTE D'ARTHUR.

BY H. M. G.

THE hurrying world makes pause to hear your story,
Your hand lies clasped in that of strong Renown,—
Your little human hand, ringed with the glory
Of setting in our vast Imperial crown
Another gem—of more than diamond might—
Kindling the fancy, dazzling to the sight.

Keen science pores already o'er the treasure
You and your comrades clutched from icy Death....
Ah, friends! I needs must use my soul to measure
These gains of famished limbs and shuddering breath:—
What Nature hid within her glaciated girth
Your jocund hands are strewing o'er the earth!

What of bleak heights? The soul's resolve is higher:
Therefore your laurels blossomed from the snow!
Courage and hope shone like a cloud of fire;
And, for the first time since Creation's glow,
Man's reverent knee impressed the vast, pure ground:—
Ever upon his knees a man is crowned.

Yet to Infinitude before you glistens
The lone 'way of the soul,' where none may find—
How'er so far he tread or keen he listens—
Foot-prints before him, or dear steps behind;
Our wistful voices give each other hail....
Alone, the Great Ice Barrier we scale.

What lies beyond? Man's soul, though ever veering,
Points to a Supreme Magnet out of sight;
I may not doubt that man is thither steering
To find on vaster planes, height beyond height,
The Centre whence all spiritual currents roll—
The Infinite, Unimaginable Pole!

THE HEIRESS AND THE ORPHAN

By Augusta Kortrecht

“THE defective flue,” said my father earnestly, “was at the bottom of all the trouble.”

Mother acquiesced, and so did Mr. Gill, the family carpenter and builder, who was erecting a new cabin in our back-yard on the site of an old one lately destroyed by fire. Indeed, the latter went even further and cited other cases to prove the point.

“Look at the colored school-house,” he said belligerently. “Look at Austinses’ kitchen. Who burnt ‘em, say I? The defective flue! Every time! Want a chocolate, sis?”

With the last words, he turned suddenly to where I, little Ellen Abercrombie, was gaping at my elders, and presented a large, unwrapped caramel. I accepted the luscious offering, and, evading my mother’s summons, stopped behind to gather information.

“Did the flue really burn the cabin down—on purpose?” I wanted to know.

“That’s what,” said Mr. Gill in cheerful tone.

“But how do flues get in?” I asked him.

He regarded me with puzzled look, then a laughing light broke in his eyes.

“Flues, sis?” he said. “Just sneak in, I reckon.”

“When everybody is fast asleep?” I persisted.

“Yep. They’re awful foxy things for crawling in, is flues.”

He began to whistle to himself, and I was just pondering my next inquiry when my brother Charche (that was his own baby name for Charles), two years my junior, came out and, taking my hand into his own, led me a reluctant captive to the house.

Visitors had arrived. There was Maribelle Mallory, dressed in embroidered mull, and there was Phelia, dressed in gingham; and it soon developed that both had come to spend the afternoon. Maribelle was an heiress, and Phelia was an orphan; but Aunt Mandy carried them off impartially to remove their hats, and mother took the opportunity to beckon me back for a few words of counsel—seeing which intention, I rebelliously forestalled her.

“I hate company,” I remarked.

"Oh, Ellen!" cried mother reproachfully. "That is the very reason I invited them here to-day. The art of giving happiness to guests in your own house is one of the loveliest things in all the world. Sometimes I have been ashamed of you on this account. Why, Mrs. Mallory says that Maribelle was actually ill and that she *cried* when she went home from here last time. She's a very sensitive little creature."

I did not believe she was a sensitive little creature at all; I had my firm conviction that if the heiress had wept it was because she had her own spiteful ends to serve, for I detested her; but I hung my head nevertheless, whereupon mother grew more cheerful and continued:

"Maribelle's French governess is to call for her at five; and Sister Anne herself—the beautiful nun in charge of the Church Home, Ellen—is coming to get Phelia. I want them to see my daughter under the very best conditions. If everything turns out nicely, if your little friends are ready to go home with their dresses fresh and their hearts happy and gay, why, then——"

Of course she did not mean to offer bribes, but with her words an ecstatic hope had flamed within my breast.

"Mother," I cried, "Mother, will you give me something if the company is n't torn or dirty when they go away? Will you, Mother?"

She looked sadly at me. The giving of rewards, other than unusual quantities of kisses, was entirely foreign to our nursery methods; but, after a little hesitation, her longing to make a proud display of my sweet manners conquered and she said:

"Yes, for once I will try it."

Then she told us that in games to play it was always kind to give first choice to the orphan, but warned me anxiously that Maribelle was an heiress and easily wounded in her tender spirit. And, moreover, I was to keep in mind that Charce was delicate and must not be crossed; and that the whole of life might be made a poem if one tried.

I assured her I would try. I felt that my inclination jumped now altogether with her wishes. There was nothing that could have pleased me more than the idea of acting out the poems I knew the livelong day. And as for the prize! At the dancing lesson every little girl except myself had carried a parasol of some description. I had been terribly mortified. I would have sold my birthright for a parasol, and yet I had not been able to bring myself to ask for it. I had felt so sure mother would be troubled at my worldly-mindedness. But I was going to earn it now. I started away to begin at once the task of cherishing the heiress and the orphan, but Charce lingered behind, the rare gold light which we loved burning faintly in his eyes.

"Mother, I'm not going to play," he said. "I'm just going to look at Maribelle. She's pretty."

It was true that the heiress was beautiful to look upon. Little boys in her presence grew silly and made ludicrous efforts to show off. Little girls gazing on Maribelle became sick with the unpleasant thought that life was not worth living. About her angel face there fell a cloud of golden ringlets. Her skin was like the softest pink of the apple blossom; she was slender as a sylph, and as lithe and graceful as a goddess in the first flush of youth. My own hair was straight and black, and I carried the weight that belongs to frank zest in eating.

Phelia, on the other hand, was plain. Upon her head she carried crisp little curls of red; on her nose she had recently developed a bunch of freckles; and with these two disfigurements her mind was altogether occupied. She could not speak without a lisp, and so she rarely spoke at all, except to repeat what others had already said.

When we had retired to the play-house I summed up these two from the crowns of their heads to the twenty toes of their little feet. If I delivered them over unspotted and untormented, unangered and unsorrowed, I was to have a parasol. I put all other thought away, and bent myself to the task with businesslike precision. Before I could speak, however, my brother, standing with dreamy eyes fixed on Maribelle, said:

"I did make up some poetry. Listen; it's for you."

A pang of jealous premonition stung my heart. Never but once before had my brother made up poetry, and that time it had been for mother. Often and often since, the longing had stirred me that he might be moved to sing the praises of his only sister Ellen. That very morning I had broached the matter to him, and he had smiled at me his golden smile. But he was not thinking of me now. I measured him searchingly and saw that opposition would be useless. The song was trembling on his very lips, and it would be sung. So I temporized.

"All right, darling," I agreed. "Say about the lantern aloft. You like that, don't you?"

He did not even hear me. He was not to be dragged down to mundane matters. He mounted the foot-stool we kept for such occasions, his slim hands motionless at his sides, his look fixed on the brown line of the Mississippi visible through the window in the lattice. For a moment he stood there, so beautiful, so inspired, beholding wondrous things unseen by us of coarser clay; then he spoke. While I listened I was caught in a very whirl of conflicting emotions. Delight in my brother's music; a distinct hatred of the pink-faced dolly who had called it forth; longing, love, and jealousy,—all these passions swept me as his words fell upon my hearing.

"Maribelle has a bonnet,
Maribelle has a veil;
Each one a pretty thing,
And I am very pale."

Silence followed. I was whispering the lines over and over to myself. How pretty they sounded! And Charce had found them inside his own heart and soul! Then the heiress, who had neither bonnet nor veil, and was also hopelessly void of poetic feeling, broke the stillness by a giggle. Out loud, openly and without shame, she tittered, because my brother's tribute failed to please her.

Phelia was going to join her! Snickering in her turn, she edged over to Maribelle's side. Charce, his reverie broken, his far-away gaze recalled by the grating sound of their merriment, stared at them amazed. Slowly a rosy red crimsoned his cheek, and, descending from the stool, he took place beside me. We were lined up for battle, the house of Abercrombie against their guests, and it was none of my doing. My angry passions rose.

I darted toward the two in a blind fury. I meant to pull their hair, golden and caroty just alike and equally hard. Already my quivering fingers were near the two bent heads, when a new thought arrested me. With a fine victory of mind over matter, I backed off. My hands still tingled with desire against them, but a blue silk parasol floated before my eyes and calmed me. These children were my guests, a sacred trust. Five o'clock would come in due course. I would endure.

I forced my thoughts to better things. From the yard below I heard the sound of hammering, blow on blow. It was Mr. Gill making a new cabin where the other had been burned. The defective flue! I knew what we might do to pass away the time!

"Less play a big, big poetry," I cried with conciliatory tone. "Charce can ride and spread the alarm on the hobby-horse, and while he is gone we will make out there was a boat with lots of people on it going up to St. Louis maybe; and a flue came along when the captain was n't looking, and—"

"A what came along?" The question was Maribelle's.

"A flue, you know. A fierce old defective flue. And it came along—"

"Through the water? How could it, goosie?"

And Phelia echoed: "How could it, goothie?"

I swallowed both the epithets, one on top of the other, and made patient answer.

"Mr. Gill told me all about flues, I reckon," I insisted. "They have long tails and horns, and one of them came swimming along and set the boat afire. Father said they made all the trouble. And there was a boy stood on the burning deck—"

A heavy tread on the stair shut me up temporarily, and Mr. Gill himself came toward our end of the back porch. He was humming a jaunty tune, and in each hand he bore a bucket of sloppy-looking

mixture. He stopped and looked down at us, and Phelia, mysteriously drawn toward his pails, slipped up to him, and raised her eyes from the thick fluid to his humorous face.

"What ith that?" she asked him timidly.

He sloshed a big brush around in one of the buckets, and let the stuff drip slowly through the air. It was slimy, but the color was a lovely yellow. Phelia hung entranced upon his words:

"Hair dye, sis. Awful nice for them that needs it."

Then he passed on up the attic steps which ascended from the end of the porch, and, coming back empty-handed a moment later, gave us a licorice stick all round and went his way.

I took up my drama where it had been cut off. "Come on, you-all," I cried. "The attic steps are going to be the burning deck, and Maribelle can be the boy. Charce will carry up the play-house cushions, and you can sit there and let the defective flue swim around you. That's the way to have a nice time, you know."

The heiress reflected for a second, and it was plain that she would frustrate me if she could see a way. But she had regretted the loss of the poet's worship, and my promise of his service won her. Charce, however, never melted toward those who had wounded his self-love, and it was as if he did not see her when she rose and smiled languidly upon him.

"Ellen," he said with perfect calm, "I bid to ride and spread the alarm."

Maribelle was about to sink back from where she had stood up. I jumped forward and carried the cushions myself to the top step, and, to my delight, she followed. Very carefully she spread out her embroidered skirts, and buried her supercilious nose within the Fairy Book she had brought along.

My brother was already mounted astride our dear but decrepit old hobby-horse, and was jouncing soberly backward and forward through every Middlesex village and farm, his eyes fixed again on the distant line of the river.

The great drama threatened to fall flat. This would never do. My whole being thirsted for action; for splendid effect; for pageantry and color. And yet I was controlled by a grim, determined mind that insisted on the orphan and the heiress being kept well out of the way of dirt and hurt.

"Phelia," I commanded, "you've got to be the captain. Can you stagger down the stairs and holler, 'We are lost,' without falling or getting torn or anything?"

I jerked myself across the porch in heartrending hitches to show her how; and then I gave her a little push toward the steps. It was growing late and we must hurry.

“““We are lost,” the captain shouted,’” I repeated. “You better shout it loud as ever you can, I reckon, and when I call you, you’ve got to stagger down the stairs. Did you ever stagger, Phelia? Do you know about it?”

“Up there?” she counter-queried. “Up the stheep sthepth, Ellen?”

A strange light gleamed in her eye, but I had no time for questions. I was going to be the defective flue! I ran into the nursery in search of costume. I was uneasily aware that the part demanded horns and a tail, and *wings* of course. How could it be a flue if it did not fly? But a great deal must be left to the imagination. I put on a pair of Charce’s knickers, with a red sweater of our old colored nurse’s, which I filled as a rhinoceros does his skin; for headgear I saw nothing more appropriate than a gingham slat sunbonnet, and this I tied about my head. Matches were out of the question, for the sufficient reason that they were out of reach; so I clutched some jack-straws from the box to represent them, and hastened back upon the stage.

The sunbonnet shut off my physical vision, but before my soul floated alluringly a blended dream of two fair and spotless guests and a blue silk parasol. By this time the parasol had developed frills of lace billowing about its edge. I groped my way to the foot of the attic steps.

Defective flues were very quiet beasts. Had not Mr. Gill told me they were foxy for sneaking in? I almost held my breath as I swam up the first two steps toward the doomed boy upon the deck above. Very stealthily I swam. Noiselessly I struck a jack-straw against the wood, and puffed the make-believe flames into a blaze.

I heard the nursery clock strike five. Our afternoon was over. It was time to summon the captain. I called cheerfully upon Phelia to stagger down. But in the self-same breath a harrowing sound smote on my ear. The voice came from above, and it was the voice of Maribelle, the heiress. I tore the sunbonnet from my head, and looked up to where my treasures had sat all sweet and clean.

What manner of creature was that which towered and tottered on the topmost step? It wore the orphan’s gingham frock. It was dancing on the orphan’s legs. Its head was streaked with *green*! In its hand a dripping brush waved hysterically back and forth.

“Phelia! Phelia!” I shrieked; and even in her stress the answer came:

“Loth! Loth! Loth! The captain sthaggered down the sthairth!”

The truth came to me almost like a blow of physical pain. Phelia was always trying to scrape off her freckles, or to bleach or darken

her hair! Mr. Gill's hair dye! No wonder her eyes had gleamed! The lure of the golden fluid had drawn her into the attic, and in the semi-darkness she had mistaken the pails and had smeared her unlucky head with grass green paint.

Even as I looked, the heiress made attempt to push off the monster towering over her. The reeking brush gave a last frantic caper and fell from the orphan's hand—plump upon the screaming heiress! The two figures blended together into indistinguishable greenness. Then a babel of voices broke upon my consciousness:

“Mon dieu! Haf I not zay to Madame it is best the petite one—the so dainty Maribelle—associate only wiz liddle ladies—”

The heiress's French *bonne* was there!

“Oh, Mrs. Abercrombie! My unfortunate little motherless child!”

The saintly Sister Anne had come to carry Phelia home!

“De good Lord know it's Ellen what done promulgate dis predication!”

My nurse had appeared with ever-ready suspicion to cast upon me!

The heiress and the orphan were separately soaked in turpentine, and were borne away accompanied by apologies and explanations and a very evil smell. I was not allowed to say good-by to them. I watched them furtively through the back porch lattice, and as they went there floated with them the vision of a blue silk parasol, with lace frills and a long silk cord and tassel. It was a parasol much to be desired, as it melted slowly into the sunset red now spreading across the western sky.

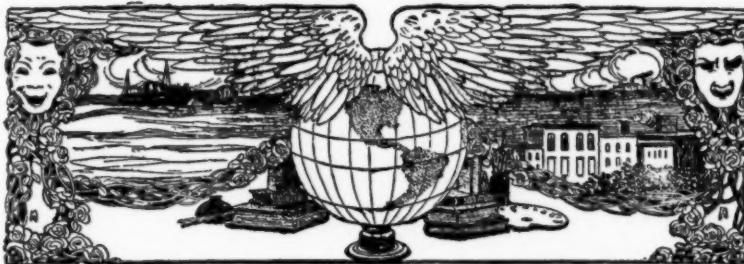
Then—oh, joyful wonder!—my mother came and mingled her tears with mine. She was dismayed at the outcome of things; but she had watched me with pride through the afternoon. She had seen me *nearly* spring upon my guests, and then refrain. It delighted her to find that I was learning self-control. And in the gathering dusk the parasol floated in once more through the window. This time the handle was tipped with silver.

When Aunt Mandy stripped me of my stage attire she gave vent to lively expression of disapproval.

“Lemme git my hands on dat Mr. Gill!” she requested me. *“I 'low I 'll bus' his haid fer leavin' dat attic do' onlocked!”* But an inspiration came to me. I put both arms about my nurse's neck and whispered coaxingly:

“He did n't do it, you know. It was n't his fault. It was the wicked old defective flue!”





WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

THE DAY OF THE POOR

DISCIPLES of unrest would have the world believe that this is the day of the rich; whereas, on the contrary, never in the history of the United States have the poor and those persons of restricted means been enabled to procure so much for so little.

The rich may speed in their automobiles, but for five cents the poor may ride royally from one side of a city like Chicago to the other, or be carried miles into the country. What an improvement over the days of our forefathers, when it was either own your private conveyance, or else journey by foot or in the expensive stage.

The rich may seclude themselves in spacious villas and country places, but the country-place of the poor is provided, absolutely free of expense to them, in extensive parks where grass, trees, fountains and music, flowers and statuary, are theirs to enjoy as if created by their pocket-books.

For two cents a letter may be sent a distance which once would have demanded twenty-five cents. To the address of the poor as to the hall of the rich the carrier delivers the mail, and for the farmer whose labor will not permit him to go to town there is the rural service.

For five cents the poor man may talk over the telephone as far as the rich man; and into the cottage as into the mansion has been extended the electric light, at a reasonable rate.

Grand opera comes high, to be sure; but what does that matter when many, many amusement gardens, as well as the public parks, charge no admittance fee to their concerts. The rich may have their

private libraries; but much larger libraries, of literature as choice and choicer, are open in cities and even in villages to the knock of the common people.

It is not the day of the rich; it is the day of the poor, wherein especial attention is being paid to the person not with much, but with little, to spend.

EDWIN L. SABIN

A POSTAL SAVINGS-BANK

A YEAR ago the question of a postal savings-bank was vigorously pressed in the United States Senate, and for a time seemed tolerably sure of success. Postmaster-General Meyer urged it to the limit, but at the eleventh hour it was allowed to retire from the front without ever coming to vote, through political exigencies of the moment. It is to be brought up again in Congress this session, and the intelligent voice of the people should be behind it, to urge the necessity of it upon our legislators. There are many reasons why the people—more than the politicians—earnestly long for the establishment of a postal savings-bank system.

During the past year, foreigners—chiefly laborers—have sent out of the United States, through the post office, nearly \$440,000,000 more than has been received here from abroad, because there are no banks here corresponding to the government savings-banks in which they have learned to have confidence in their home countries. That is only a suggestion from the annual report of the auditor of the Post Office Department, but it is a powerful sermon on our need, and immediate need, of postal savings-banks. Five hundred million dollars a year is no small loss to our currency in circulation. Postal savings-banks would keep the money here, and millions more which are unaccounted for in bank reports, being hoarded in all kinds of hiding places, because the owners cannot or will not trust it to ordinary savings-banks.

New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, with ideal savings-bank laws and abundant banks, have called out some of this treasure. Those States hold two-thirds of all the savings-bank deposits in the United States. In the South and in the West, with the exception of Iowa, savings deposits are almost non-existent.

Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Australia, and New Zealand are far ahead of us in such facilities and results. New Zealand has less than a million inhabitants, yet last year there were five hundred and forty post-office savings-banks, with 298,746 accounts and a total deposit of \$48,766,325; an average account of \$166.50, representing fifty-six dollars per capita for the entire population. There is a postal savings-bank for every 1,646 inhabitants, so that few are far

distant from a place to deposit, and an average of 548 of them have accounts—about one in three.

Now, if the United States came up to the New Zealand standard, we should have fifty thousand savings-banks, with a deposit of five and a half billion dollars. In reality, last year we had but 1,319 savings-banks, and instead of one in three being a depositor—which would mean thirty million—we had only eight million depositors. The average deposit in America was \$433.80, against the \$166.50 in New Zealand, showing that our present savings-banks are patronized by the comparatively well-to-do, and not by the class which the New Zealand system reaches, and which a postal savings-bank system in this country would reach.

The benefit to the poorer classes in encouraging them to save, and to put their money where it will earn something and not be in danger of loss, or else be in such easy reach that they will be tempted to spend it, ought to be sufficient to influence our law-makers to immediate action. But that argument has failed thus far. It often fails under the great dome of the Capitol. Cupidity sometimes does better, and one would think that in these times when the cry is for economy, and for emergency currency to ward off panics, and high rates through restricted circulation, the enormous reserve which would be called out by postal savings-banks would be a telling argument. The benefits are great enough to induce the American people to demand of their representatives that they drop the political chicanery, and proceed forthwith to pass the postal savings-bank bill which was thoroughly discussed and generally approved two years ago.

WILLARD FRENCH

MEDICINAL LITERATURE

TO the litterateur, all the world seems to be reading, and, what is more, to be guided by what it reads. It is not strange, therefore, that Mr. Gilbert Chesterton should find in the adventuresome character of our literature, mentioning Kipling and Cutliffe Hyne as conspicuous offenders, a fertile soil for bank defalcations and other picturesque transgressions.

It would seem that when the bank cashier or bookkeeper hurries through with his work, he is not bound for the ball game, but rather for his study, eagerly to devour the "six-shilling dreadfuls," as Mr. Chesterton characterizes them, in contrast to the penny dreadfuls of adventuresome boyhood.

It would further appear that when men steal they do it for a stunt rather than for the more commonplace reasons, such as playing the races or the stock market, living beyond their means, or playing

the monkey-imitator to franchise-grabbers and other secure forms of parasitism.

In short, Mr. Chesterton (and let us hope that he is moved chiefly by a spirit of satire) finds the cause of crime rather in literature and art than in that drab materialism which the more eminent criminologists, such as Ferri and Lombroso, emphasize.

As a remedy, Mr. Chesterton issues a call for medicinal literature, presumably on the order of "Ten Nights in a Barroom," which will poetize the counting of (other people's) money, which will make the search for an elusive error in a trial balance as inspiring and exciting as Roosevelt's trip to Africa, which will transform a desk into a throne, an office cap into a crown, rate per cent. into spherical trigonometry, a balance sheet into a diploma, and a paper-weight into a philosopher's stone.

It is a pretty theory which the bizarre Mr. Chesterton has evolved, but there are two serious objections to its adoption: first, it is impossible to make romance out of routine; and second, if it were possible, those who are familiar with the routine, and for whom it was especially designed, could not be induced to read it. Furthermore, if they could be induced to read it, it would not quench in them that universal desire for higher wages leading to a higher standard of living.

To be sure, it would be ideal if our economic problems could be thus romantically settled, but we fear that Mr. Chesterton will have to guess (or joke) again.

ELLIS O. JONES

HOPE TAKES ANOTHER SPRING

THE recent report of a regular Wild-West, stand-and-deliver hold-up on a train near Jersey City is the most encouraging sign we have noticed for years. It has long been clear that the East, with its abandoned farms, summer resorts, and political rings, was effete, deplorably effete.

But, no matter how bad a condition becomes, it can be endured if there is a chance for betterment. So, in the West, there was a time when it was lawless and ungodly. It was apparently the darkness before the dawn which was coming down the trail on horseback. We now know that the road-agent and the outlaw were but the necessary forerunners of those later halcyon, bonanza days, the chief characteristics of which are ruggedness and virility, with no place on the menu for the effete. And so we are cheerful. The more hold-ups in the East the better.

PHIL COLLOM

THE "INTERNATIONAL PEST" OF ANTI-MILITARISM

HERE comes a change in the air, to-day; a new spirit breathing over the face of the world. General Gallifet dies in Paris, and Paris mourns not the departed military grandee. Time and again, during his administration of the French War Department, under Waldeck-Rousseau, the streets rang with: "*A bas Gallifet!*" For Gallifet it was who lined up two thousand prisoners against the walls of Père la Chaise, in '71, and had machine-guns rip loose into them; Gallifet it was who rode his big white horse through the avenues, pointing out men to be killed in batches. Thiers and the French bourgeoisie hailed him a hero—but France, the people, does not mourn his death.

For France is alive, to-day, with that strange, new idealism which Kaiser Wilhelm calls "an international pest." I mean the militant spirit of peace, peace which at length is going to be had at all costs, not now through "diplomacy," but through the laying-down of arms by the common folk themselves—peace which France and all Europe are going to get even if (like the Irishman) they have to fight for it.

France is tired of war, France the people, France the proletariat. Millions of that proletariat have been ruined by war and have been served up as cannon-fodder, the past few centuries. Now they rebel. Mass-murder, they are beginning to declare, they will no longer tolerate. Led by Gustav Hervé, "the man without a country," Hervé the intellectual, the orator, the dogged and incorruptible Breton, whose life has been one long checker of prison-sentences, millions of Frenchmen outside the army and inside it, too, are learning to sing "*L'Internationale*" in deadly earnest:

Les rois nous soulaient de fumées,
Paix entre nous, guerre aux tyrans!
Appliquons la grève aux armées,
Crosse en l'air, et rompons les rangs! . . .

Germany, too, is humming the same new air, not quite so strongly, perhaps, yet ever-increasingly. For there Karl Liebknecht and many others alternately sit in jail and mount the rostrum or even the corner soap-box to proclaim, "No war!" Already, so observers say, one-third of the German army is tainted with the peace heresy—maybe more. The Kaiser, "amazed and helpless, like a cow watching a locomotive," roars out: "*Vaterlandlose Gesellen!*" to which the anti-militarists merely reply with a smile, a bow, fresh propaganda, and new platoons of recruits.

Italy is agitated by the same question. In Russia it is permeating the army with the influx of revolutionary peasants into the ranks, through conscription. England is beginning to feel it. The declaration of war, or even its proximate possibility, anywhere in Europe, would rouse oppositions undreamed of a decade past. Spain, for example, most Catholic and Royalist of countries—that is to say, most patriotic and militaristic—has just shown what the anti-militarist agitation of the past few years can do toward crippling wars of aggression and exploitation. For almost the first time in her history a foreign war against a pagan people has failed to rouse enthusiasm—nay, on the contrary, has loosed the bonds of social order and all but overset the throne.

Much remains to do; much has already been done. When Japan and Russia were officially cutting each others' throats, the anti-militarists—that is to say, the Socialist Parties—of those two countries, exchanged messages of brotherhood and good will.

When, recently, both the British Parliament and the German Reichstag were planning to lay more Dreadnaught keels, the Socialists in those two nations, through their official representatives, shook hands and promised each other that there would be no war between them till first there had been war at home.

To give in detail all the specific cases of averted war, waste, and bloodshed, through the intervention of the Brussels Bureau; or to indicate at all fully the many instances in which the growing and none too good-humored anti-militarist sentiment of the European peoples has lately (Frankenstein-like) chilled the blood of monarchy, would far extend the limits of this outline.

Let just this be said, and well driven home: that not through diplomacy, not through Hague Conferences, not through church or state or royal power, will permanent world-peace ever come, but just through the now-crystallizing refusal of the common people to be taxed, suffer, march, shoot, die for their masters' benefit (alias "the flag")!

That is Anti-militarism, that refusal, an international pest indeed—from the standpoint of Royalty and Plutocracy.

GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND



WALNUTS AND WINE



MODEL LETTERS

(From "First Aid to Everybody," by Wilberforce Jenkins, C. Q. D.)

(THE TOUCH SCIENTIFIC FOR A COLLEGE BOY)

BLUE HAVEN, DECEMBER FIFTEENTH, 19—

DEAR DAD:

Bearing in mind your repeated injunctions to me to stand well in all my classes, I have been doing my level best all this term. So far I am 'way up in everything except Finance, which I am studying under Professor Reddymun, the leading Economist of the day. Somehow or other, I cannot seem to get the principles of Finance firmly fixed in my mind. I am afraid the subject is a trifle too theoretical for my plodding intellect, and of course the University has no Financial Laboratories in which a man may get the ideas through practical work along experimental lines.

If you feel inclined to put me in such a position that I shall have daily before me practical illustrations of the workings of this intricate science, I think I shall come through with flying colors. This could be done, I am told, by your depositing to my credit at the Blue Haven National Bank a check for five hundred or a thousand dollars, which entitles me to a check-book, a pass-book, a full set of banking blanks, such as deposit slips and notices of over-draft; regular examination of my pass-book; and all the other details which a Financier should know about if his foundation is to be a solid one. The thing can be done for two hundred and fifty

Walnuts and Wine

dollars, but it seems to me that one thousand dollars is the better figure, since with a balance of that kind on hand I shall be able now and then to get the hang of Discounts and other matters pertaining to the higher branches.

I should much appreciate a reply, with check, by return mail, since the fall examinations are nearly due, and I want to get the system clear in my mind before I am confronted with Professor Reddymun's questions.

Your affectionate son,

BILL.

(FOR A STRUGGLING MAN OF BUSINESS TO HIS PASTOR)

CEMENTVILLE, N. J., OCTOBER THIRTEENTH, 19—

MY DEAR DR. FOURTHLY:

I quite agree with your statement, in your recent appeal to me to be one of ten members of the congregation to send you a check for one hundred dollars for the missionaries, that we should all stand together in these days of prosperity. I feel it all the more strongly after glancing through my morning's mail, from which I learn that my balance at the bank is \$237.60, and that my bills due and payable to-morrow are as follows:

Snip, Buttons & Hem, Tailors.....	\$148.00
Stake & Hamm, Butchers.....	263.00
Sand, Prune & Co., Grocers.....	214.00
Mme. Du Mode, Gowns.....	316.00
Wun Bing, Laundry.....	23.00
Servants' Wages	125.00
Sundry Accounts	934.32
<hr/>	
Total liabilities	\$2023.32
Cash available	237.60
<hr/>	
Deficit	\$1785.72

I am willing to stand together if you are, and on receipt of a check for \$178.57, or one-tenth of my liabilities, from the Missionary Fund, I will gladly send you my check for one hundred dollars, as you request. Perhaps we shall save time and some postage if you just deduct my contribution from your check, and send me the balance, amounting to \$78.57.

Believe me, my dear sir,

Cordially yours,

WILLIAM B. SKINNEM.

Walnuts and Wine

Mother's Day

is every day while the mother lives, and as long afterwards as her children survive her.

For over one hundred years, we have endeavored to help the mother inculcate cleanly habits to produce a healthy skin.



The use of Pears' Soap prevents the irritability, redness and blotchy appearance from which many children suffer, and prevents unsightly disease which so baffles dermatologists, and hinders the proper physical and moral development of the child.

Pears' Soap produces a matchless complexion which not only gives natural beauty but a matchless comfort to the body.

Health, beauty and happiness follow the use of Pears' Soap. The mothers of today can well follow the example of the last six generations and have their memory revered by teaching their children to use

Pears' Soap

Mother's Day is to be observed all over the United States, the second Sunday in May, to honor and uplift motherhood, and to give comfort and happiness to the best mother who ever lived—*your mother*. In loving remembrance of your mother, do some distinct act of kindness—either by visit or letter. A white flower (perfectly white carnation) is the emblem to be worn by you. Send one to the sick or unfortunate in homes, hospitals or prisons.

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.
"All rights secured."

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

(LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR A DUBIOUS FRIEND)

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER FIFTH, 19—

MY DEAR MR. BLANK:

The bearer of this letter, Colonel Sponge, has asked for an introduction to you, and I have yielded to his solicitations. The Colonel is one of the most ABSORBINGLY interesting men I have ever met, generous to a fault, even his own, and a most persistent caller at my house and office for many years. His friendship for me is one of the most TOUCHING episodes of my life. When I say that he has a most wonderful GRASP on everything that he touches, I do not in the least exaggerate. His powers of RECEP-TIVITY are greater than those of any man I have ever known, and I doubt if he has ever come into contact with any phase of life anywhere that he has not TAKEN SOMETHING OF IT AWAY WITH HIM. Companionship with him has been a constant source of RELIEF to me, and his manifestations of devotion have at times gone to such excesses of asseveration that I have had to CHECK them. I do not know of a more PROMISING association than his is likely to prove to you, if he remains true, as I have no reason to doubt that he will, to the many NOTES I have had the opportunity of making as to his character. Every ENDORSE-MENT that I have given him has come back to me a hundred-fold. He is rather a LOAN figure in spite of his geniality, and I commend him to your friendly INTEREST.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES L. STIGGINS.

A RESOLVE

By W. Dayton Wegefarth

I have chosen my profession: an author I shall be,
But I 'll only write "best sellers," and perhaps some poetry;
I shall own a city mansion (which my standing will demand),
And an inspiration villa in some far romantic land.
A fair amanuensis shall write as I dictate,
And a private secretary will my royalties keep straight.
I shall meet the heads of nations and the aristocracy,
And, of course, in leisure moments I must write occasion'ly.
I shall let them lionize me, taking all that comes my way,
For I 've chosen my profession—and I 'm going to make it pay!

Walnuts and Wine

NABISCO

Sugar Wafers

One is never at a loss what to offer guests for refreshment, dessert or after dessert — if NABISCO Sugar Wafers are always kept in the home. The most delightful confection ever conceived.

In 10 cent Tins. Also in Twenty-five cent Tins.
TRY CHOCOLATE TOKENS—Another unique confection enclosing the enticing goodness of Nabisco within a shell of rich, mellow chocolate.

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY



In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

RETRIBUTION

Bleary-eyed and with faltering steps, showing every sign of a sad case of the morning after, he was led before the police magistrate.

"Drunk on the street," charged the police officer who had made the arrest.

"What is your name?" asked the justice.

"William Johnson," was the answer.

"Your occupation?" again queried the justice.

"I'm a furniture mover, sir, employed by——"

A fiendish look was seen to cross the magistrate's face.

"Johnson," he said, "are you aware of the fact that I moved yesterday?"

"Sure I am," beamed Johnson. "I moved your stuff."

He could say no more. He had no listener. The J.P. was busy ransacking the law-books that lay before him. It was some time before he spoke.

"My man," he said at last, "I find, I'm sorry to say, that I can't have you hanged. To send you to jail would be too good for you. You would corrupt the poor men of nobler walks of life. Therefore, I sentence you to return to your employer, and tell him that I intend to deduct from his bill everything that you broke. Now git!"

R. T. R. Gardner

CONSOLATION

By Clifton B. Dowd

Adonis was a handsome chap,
A goodly sight to see;
But though his sort are scarce to-day,
Cheer up! you still have me!

THE MEN DON'T DESERVE IT

"I defy any one to name a field of endeavor in which men do not receive more consideration than women!" exclaimed the orator at a suffragette meeting.

"The chorus," murmured some irresponsible person.

W. Stockard

FORCING A HANDICAP

Diogenes returned from his search for an honest man.

"Given up the chase?" they inquired.

"It became a matter of necessity," replied the philosopher.
"Some one stole my lantern."

Perrine Lambert

Walnuts and Wine

A Rich Red-Brown Color

That is one of the distinguishing characteristics of

BAKER'S Breakfast Cocoa

made from beans of the best
quality scientifically blended.

When the cocoa powder is so dark as to appear almost black it is a sure sign that it has been artificially colored, or that it was made from imperfectly cleansed beans of a poor quality.

The genuine Baker product is ground to an extraordinary fineness so that the particles remain in even suspension and form a smooth paste — the only legitimate way of treating it without changing the natural color or impairing the nutritive qualities.

A handsomely illustrated recipe booklet for
making candies, cakes, drinks, etc., sent free by

Registered in U. S. Pat. Office

WALTER BAKER & CO. LTD.

Established 1780

DORCHESTER, MASS.

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

A FEMININE WAIL

By Grace MacDonald Thompson

I wish I had more hair, I do.
I knew that Marcel wave I'd rue.
I've bought six rats, ten puffs, a braid;
For full a dozen curls I've paid,
And yet I've always had too few.

Shop-girls wear tons of varied hue;
The yellow Chinaman owns a cue;
Each store shows wigs of every shade.
I wish I had more hair.

Now fickle fashion's changed anew.
No more she calls for puffs; in lieu,
Around your head in strands are laid
Four switches till a turban's made.
I don't mind owning up to you
I wish I had more hair.

THE INTREPID TRAVELLER

"Yes, sir, I shot the leopard on the spot."
"Which one?"

Isaline Normand

QUITE LIKELY

First Motorist: "What did you do to-day?"
Second Motorist: "Ran across an old friend."

La Touche Hancock

JOHNNY'S WATCH

Johnny's aunt gave him a bright and shiny dollar watch for his birthday, and the boy's satisfaction was unbounded. A couple of weeks later he remarked very dolefully that the watch was n't keeping good time.

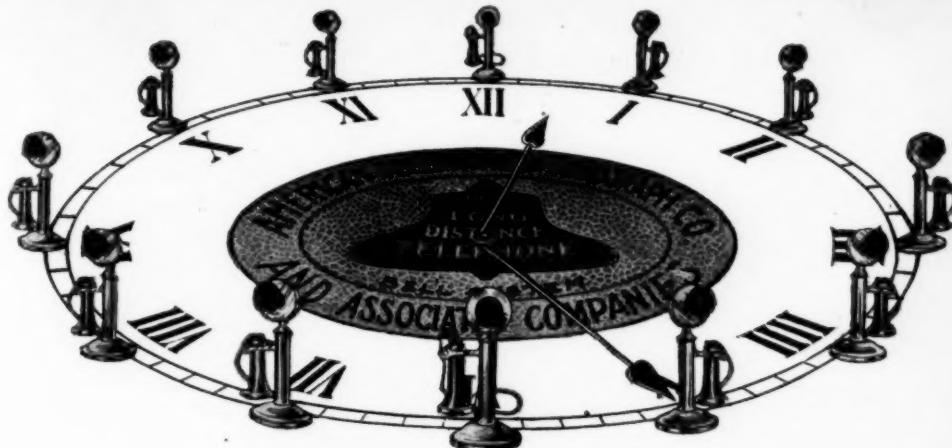
"It must be wound very carefully every night before you go to bed," his aunt told him.

"Oh, I never knew that," said the boy. "Now I s'pose I've just gone and ruined it."

"Why, when have you been winding it?"

"The first thing every morning," answered the boy sorrowfully.

Grace E. Sugerman



The Always-on-Duty Telephone

Your Bell Telephone is on duty 1440 minutes every day. So is the telephone exchange; so are the toll lines which radiate through the neighboring communities; so are the long distance lines which connect you with far-away cities and other radiating systems.

The whole Bell System is on duty 1440 minutes a day—and if any of these minutes are not used, their earning power is irrevocably lost.

Like the Police Force or the Fire Department, the telephone is not always working—but it is always on duty and always costing money. But you would not be satisfied with the fire department if your burning house had to take its turn; nor with the police force if you had to wait in line to receive protection.

You want service at once. That is exactly what the Bell System endeavors to give you—immediate attention, instantaneous service. It strives to be always ready to receive your call at any point, and connect you with any other point—without postponement or delay.

It would be much cheaper if telephone customers would be content to stand in line, or if their communications could be piled up to be sent during slack hours; or if the demand was so distributed as to keep the whole system comfortably busy for 1440 consecutive minutes a day.

But the public needs immediate and universal service and the Bell System meets the public's requirements.

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention **LIPPINCOTT'S**.

Walnuts and Wine

GALLANT ENGINEER!

Cousin Will and his sister Mary, a maiden lady timidly disposed, were driving the old nag in the buggy when they met a traction engine. The old mare was of a calm and undemonstrative disposition, but Mary, fearing a runaway, insisted on alighting and walking past the engine. The engineer stopped the vociferous thing and came forward to offer assistance.

"Can I lead your horse by the engine, sir?" he inquired.

"Thank you," answered Will; "I can manage the horse very easily, but I would be much obliged if you would lead the lady by."

George W. Wilson

SOMETHING DROPPED

"Now, children," said the teacher, "you have been making too much noise. Let us see if we can't all be quiet. Just see how still you can be—so still you can hear a pin drop."

The teacher waited expectantly. The pupils responded in a body. After several moments of profound silence, in which not a sound was heard from pencil, book, or paper, the boy in the back seat called out:

"Let her drop, teacher!"

Dick Dickinson

DECEIVERS, EVER

They were arguing about the alleged inborn strain of deceitfulness in woman, and she retaliated by citing the instances of men deceiving their wives.

"I suppose," said he, "that you hold that a man should never deceive his wife."

"Oh, no," she smiled back at him; "I should n't go so far as that. How would it be possible for the average man to get a wife if he did n't deceive her?"

R. M. Winans

RUNS IN THE FAMILY

Mr. Agile (to Mr. Stoutman, running for a car): "Hallo, old boy! I thought you were too lazy to run like that."

Mr. Stoutman (languidly): "Easily explained, my dear boy; laziness runs in our family."

H. E. Zimmerman

SHAMEFUL

Extract from a young lady's letter from Venice:

Last night I lay in a gondola in the Grand Canal, drinking it all in, and life never seemed so full before.

Robert E. Bradley

Walnuts and Wine



The Song of the Imitators —

“We’re just as good as
Kellogg’s”

But there are none so good and absolutely
none are genuine without this signature

W.K. Kellogg



In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

ONE REDEEMING FEATURE

"Well," said one, in discussing baseball matters, "I don't envy the umpire. Look at the abuse he gets, and it's no cinch of a job."

"Oh, I don't know," replied his Irish friend. "Just t'ink o' the hours."

M. F. Maclare



SLOW BUT SURE

By Nixon Waterman

"Fly with me!" her lover pleaded,
As he pressed her to elope;
But his wishes went unheeded,
For she calmly answered: "Nope!
Not while 'aeros,' as at present,
Are so apt to plunge and balk;
But," said she, "the weather's pleasant;
Don't you think we'd better walk?"



A HUMAN CHOICE

A conscientious Sunday-school teacher had been endeavoring to impress upon her pupils the ultimate triumph of goodness over beauty. At the close of a story in which she flattered herself that this point had been well established, she turned confidently to a ten-year-old pupil and inquired, "And now, Alice, which would you rather be, beautiful or good?"

"Well," replied Alice, after a moment's reflection, "I think I'd a great deal rather be beautiful—and repent."

Sophie H. Sears



IT COMES HIGH

Howard: "What would you say if you were asked to give an illustration of the unattainable?"

Coward: "Well, I always used to give champagne, but now I've changed it to steak."

C. A. Bolton



An optimist is one who would rather believe that everything is all right than know the truth.

Ellis O. Jones



THE INSPIRED PRESS

A kiss.

L. T. H.

Walnuts and Wine

The Knabe

Style V—Upright Grand

Mahogany Case

Beautifully Veneered

Size 4 ft. 6 in.



Price \$550

The Knabe—*The World's Best Piano*—is the one Piano not only abreast-of-the-times, but to-day, more than ever, is solely and purely representative of faultless construction, exceptional durability and that tonal sublimity that *cannot be successfully imitated or equalled*.

Knabe Pianos may be purchased of any Knabe representative at New York prices with added cost of freight and delivery.



The Knabe

MIGNONETTE Horizontal GRAND

In Mahogany, Price \$700

Where others have failed to build a

Small and Perfect Grand Piano

meeting with present-day requirements, The House of Knabe, after years of research and experiment, has succeeded in producing.

THE WORLD'S BEST GRAND PIANO

In the small size of
5 FEET 2 INCHES

This instrument possesses the same matchless tone for which KNABE GRANDS have long since been distinguished—a tone peculiar to and distinctive of all KNABE PIANOS, which carry the endorsement of the leading musicians of the day.

NOLLEY

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Walnuts and Wine

ONLY ONE

Little Jack's mother showed him a letter from a "new aunt," who had attained to this relationship by marrying Jack's favorite uncle.

"Mamma," said Jack innocently, as he laboriously spelled out the signature, "Belle Paine," "does Aunty pronounce her front name in two syllables?"

Karl von Kraft



SHE KNEW HER TASTE

An old Highland woman, who was quite fond of her dram, was coming to Perth on a visit. At the railway station, the uniformed porters quite took her eye.

One of them, approaching her, said, "Porter? Porter?"

Whereupon she answered in a most appreciative voice, "Thank ye, sir, but A think A 'll rayther tak' a' little whuskey."

Mabel M. Notland



THE DRIVER WAS PUZZLED

A negro and his truck were rapidly careening down the steep hill to the station. Crates and boxes were noisily bumping to the street, but a small negro sat on the summit undisturbed by the rapidly accruing wreckage. Presently the driver pulled up at the station with a flourish, and, looking over his shoulder, his face became momentarily transfixed with astonishment to note that a great portion of his load was missing.

Turning to the small negro, he demanded:

"What's de matter wif yo mouf, niggah? Hit wuks well 'nuff w'en dey ain't no 'casion!"

Eliot Kays Stone



GOOD ADVICE

Jack: "I had proposed and been accepted when the lights suddenly went out."

Dick: "What did she do?"

Jack: "Suggested that we keep it dark."

L. B. Coley



C'EST LA VIE

By N. Parker Jones

He said that her nose was pugged, and so

She gave him his congé,

And gave her heart to the tactful beau

Who called it retroussé!

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“Yours
to
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Walnuts and Wine

A CLERICAL CALL-DOWN

Being an Irishman, Bishop L., of the Roman Catholic diocese of Syracuse, New York, is very fond of a good joke, but he will not tolerate vulgarity or profanity.

One day he was being shaved in his favorite barber-shop when four or five young bloods came in. They did not recognize the Bishop underneath the coating of lather which covered his face, and they proceeded to pass the time by telling stories and using expressions which, to say the least, were rather strong. Imagine their astonishment and chagrin when the barber pulled away the towel, and the Bishop, cleanly shaved, stood before them. So non-plussed were they that no one tried to take the vacant chair, and the barber called several times:

“Next gentleman! Next gentleman!”

The Bishop smiled somewhat grimly as he said:

“It is n’t a bit of use, John. There’s not a man here that has the effrontery to answer to *that* name.”

J. G. Lynch

•

DOWN IN THE JUNGLE

By Louis Schneider

There was once a fuzzy old Hindoo,
Who said, “I make clothes mighty thin do:
Fact is, in July,
When the mercury’s high,
I often make just my old skin do!”

•

A MATTER OF FRAMING

The picture-dealer had a sign in his window which read, “Anything Framed Up in Any Style,” which he thought would catch the floating trade, and it did. A man came in, with his face like a hair-brush and his clothes like a Salvation Army collection.

“Can you make good on what that sign says?” he inquired half-hopefully.

“Sure,” responded the dealer, with the confidence of the man who advertises.

“Well, I have n’t been home for two nights, and I wish you would frame up an excuse for me to take to my wife. I’ll pay any kind of a price if it will do the work. And I want it right now.”

W. J. Lampton

Walnuts and Wine

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Mennen's

Borated Tal-

cum Toilet Powder

is as necessary for

Mother's baby as for Baby's
mother. It contains no starch,
rice powder or other irritants found
in ordinary toilet powders. Dealers
make a larger profit by selling substitutes.
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Sample box for 2c stamp.

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Walnuts and Wine

WHERE WAS JOHN?

A San Francisco woman whose husband had been dead some years went to a medium, who produced the spirit of her dead husband.

"My dear John," said the widow to the spirit, "are you happy now?"

"I am very happy," John replied.

"Happier than you were on earth with me?" she asked.

"Yes," was the answer; "I am far happier now than I was on earth with you."

"Tell me, John, what is it like in heaven?"

"Heaven!" said John. "I'm not in heaven."

Reed Moyer



BRILLIANT IDEA

By Harold Susman

They caught a fellow stealing ties;
His capture was to him a shock;
He said in accents of surprise,
"But I was only taking stock!"



HIS LEADING LADY

Two men of West Philadelphia were exchanging greetings the other day when one of them exclaimed:

"Why, Edward, old chap, you're in fine trim! You're positively beaming! I've never seen you look so satisfied with yourself and with the world. Any particular reason?"

"Yes," answered Edward. "The fact is, I've just succeeded in signing up our leading lady for another season."

"I had no idea you were in the theatrical business."

"Nor am I. I am referring to our cook."

Edwin Tarrisse



THE WIFE-BEATER EXPLAINS

A Minnesota judge was approached by a Swede shortly after the State had passed a law against wife-beating.

"Judge," said the Scandinavian, "that new law has put me in awful troubles, and I want you to give me some advice. I don't want to break no laws, but it's this way, Judge: if I don't beat my wife once a month, I can't live with her; if I do beat her, I goes to jail. Now, Judge, you either got to gimme a permit to beat her or you got to gimme a divorce."

Caroline Lockhart



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The sweep of an idea is not a matter of geography. Start something in Boston and you get the echo in Bombay. It is an idea that makes neighbors of us all.

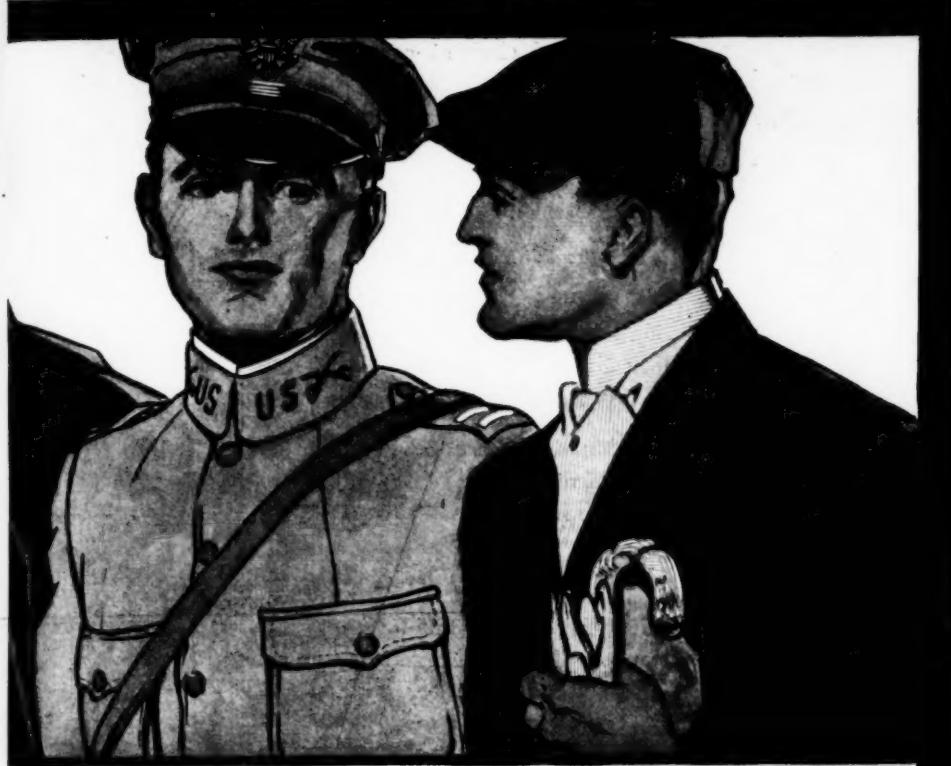
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Write and we'll send you a pamphlet—Dept. B

King Gillette

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Walnuts and Wine

A SHOCKING QUESTION

Traveling man (to hotel clerk at counter): "Can I take a bath here?"

Clerk (indignant): "No, sir; hire a room."

C. L. Van Every

38

THE AMIABLE JONES

By Edith R. Mirrlees

Jones commuted from Brooklyn.

He bore his fate like a man.

When his car was late, he waited;

When his car was early, he ran,

Strap-hung, and claimed he liked it;

Chuckled over the rain;

Faced the incursions of shoppers

With never a sign of pain.

But whenever he got to the water—

No gain without some loss—

So sure as he boarded that ferry,

It *always* made him cross!

39

A QUESTION OF PSYCHOLOGY

"The average child is a veritable barbarian," said the Psychology Professor, "and until its mind is sufficiently developed to comprehend the deeper meanings of religion, it remains a little pagan."

Young Mrs. Windson smiled politely; but with a my-child-is-not-as-other-children-are expression she said:

"That may be true in many instances, but I do wish you could hear my little Lois say her prayers. She is so earnest that I believe she fully understands all I've tried to tell her."

It was the Professor's turn to look politely incredulous.

"I'll call her in and let her answer for herself," she added, somewhat nettled by his indifference.

In response to her summons, a small girl entered the room.

"Darling," said the mother fondly, "tell Professor Brindly to whom you say your little prayers."

Lois looked up with an expression of angelic sweetness.

"To the bed," she answered briefly.

Katherine Hopson

Don't Play with Fire

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Walnuts and Wine

FARMER, PLEASE EXPLAIN

By mistake a farmer had got aboard a car reserved for a party of college graduates who were returning to their alma mater for some special event. There was a large quantity of refreshments on the car, and the farmer was allowed to join the others. Finally some one asked him: "Are you an alumnus?"

"No," said the farmer earnestly; "but I believe in it."

W. Stockard

COULD DO IT, TOO

A female lion-tamer, young and fair, beckoned to a big lion, and it came and took a piece of sugar out of her mouth.

"Why, I could do that trick!" exclaimed a gentleman in the front row.

"What! You?" retorted the fair performer.

"Certainly—just as well as the lion." *William C. Bennett*

CHUMS

By Florence Edith Austin

Said the boy, "I wonder whether
You and I could have some fun."
So they both went off together—
The boy and the loaded gun.

A CUMULATIVE MISTAKE

"How in the name of common sense did you come to buy so many eggs, when I told you to buy only one dozen?" said a lady to her colored cook.

"Well, missus, you tol' me to git one dozen, but I understood you to say two dozen, so I told de groceryman free dozen, but he misundertook me to say fo' dozen, so he gimme five dozen."

H. E. Zimmerman

AN EXPERIENCED WAITER

At the first meal on board the ocean liner, Smythe was beginning to feel like casting his bread upon the waters. His friends had told him that when he began to feel that way he should stuff himself. He tackled a cutlet first, but it did n't taste right. He observed to the waiter, "Waiter, this cutlet is n't very good."

The waiter looked at his whitening face, then replied, "Yes, sir; but for the length of time you 'll 'ave h'it, sir, h'it won't matter, sir."

W. R. Jamieson, M.D.

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At a recent meeting of a hotel men's association, in Washington, some one told a story of a young matron who sought accommodations at what is known as the highest-priced hostelry in the United States.

It appears that during the absence of her husband, gone south on business, the young wife engaged quarters at the hotel in question. "How much do you charge a day, with meals?" she asked innocently.

"Forty-five dollars, madam," was the response.

"Oh," hastily added the young matron, "I have a baby that sleeps with me."

"The baby's meals will be extra."

"She—she takes only sterilized milk."

"Sterilized milk, madam, is one dollar and a quarter a bottle."

"I feed her myself," the matron added.

"In that case," the clerk said, "we will have to charge you corkage."

Fenimore Martin

FAIR PLAY

When Wilton Lackaye last visited the West, he was introduced to a merchant who professed an ardent love for things dramatic. A few days after their meeting, the actor received this note from his new acquaintance:

I hear from many sources that your performance is excellent. Will you kindly send me two passes for any night next week?

After making a few inquiries touching the standing of his new friend, Lackaye sent the following reply:

I hear from many sources that your wealth is great. Will you kindly send me two thousand dollars any time this week?

Edwin Tarrisse

HIS MISTAKE

"I'm sorry to hear, old man, that your wife left you."

"My mistake. I took her for a mate. She proved to be a skipper."

Clara O'Neill

PAYING THE PENALTY

"Chauffeurs don't get much exercise, do they?"

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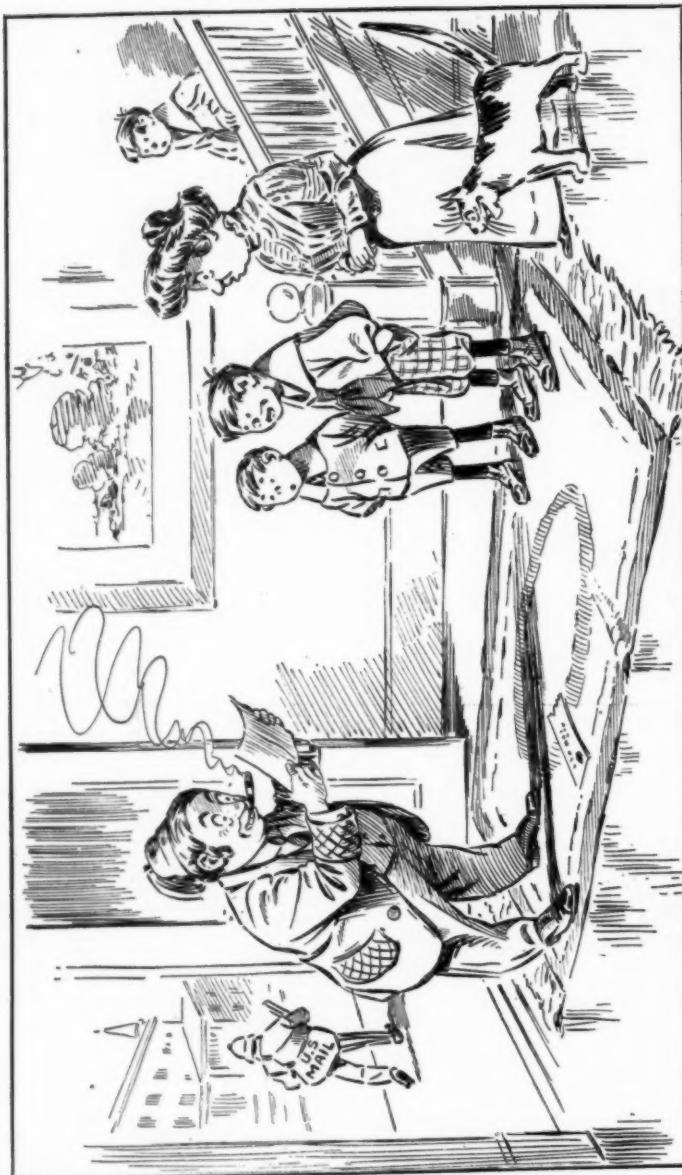
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"The Boys Got on the Job."—Continued.



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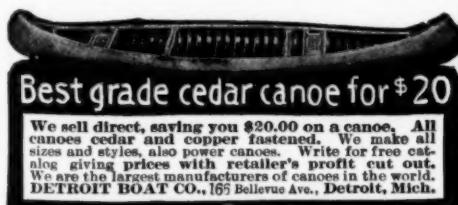


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"THE BOYS GOT ON THE JOB."—Continued.



TODAY.—"Say Pop, there's a fierce pile of ashes in the cellar."

JOHN.—"Well! here, take this and go down the street and buy some boxes and set the ashes all out. This is ash day. We'll start the thing right. Hurry up now, the board of directors meet this morning and they'll be here soon."

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"The Boys Got on the Job" — Continued.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—(One hour later) "Wretch! traitor! You have betrayed the cause! You have sold us out!"
JOHN.—"Heavens! how?"

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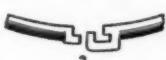
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"The Boys Got on the Job."—Continued.



JOHN.—"Gents, this must be a mistake!"
BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—"Tis eh? Well you can come with us and we'll show you."

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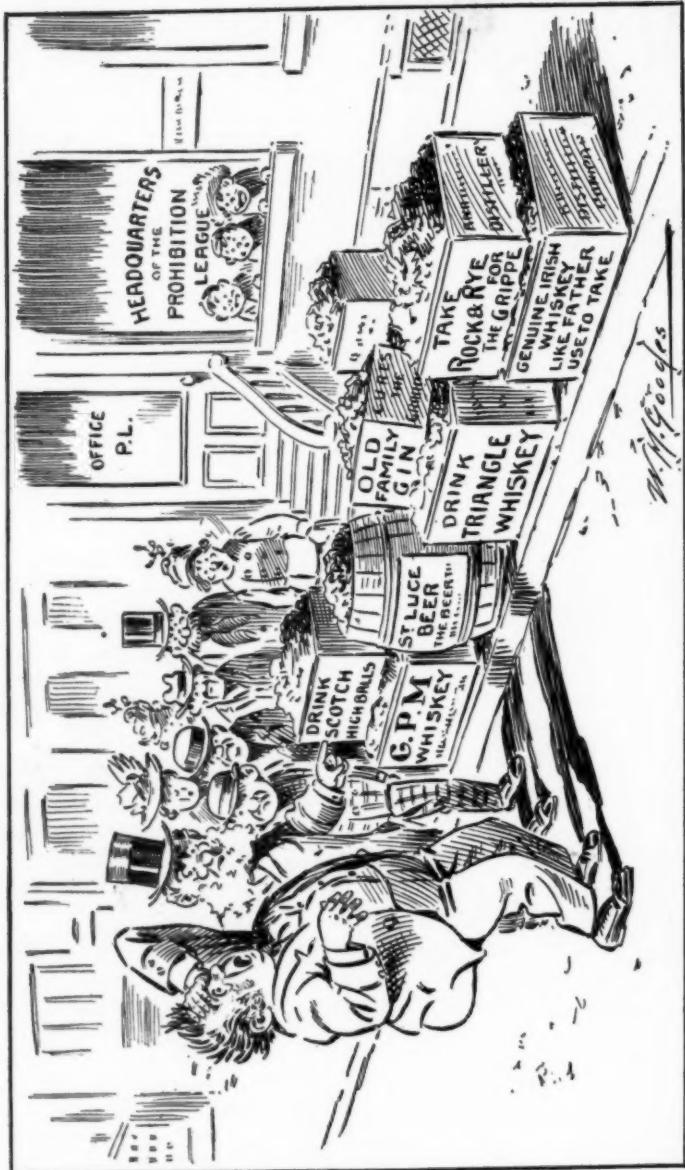
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"The Boys Got on the Job,"—Concluded.



JOHN.—"Good heavens! they've bought the boxes from a liquor dealer!"

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